OCEAN *of* REASONING

A Great Commentary on Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā



rJE TSONG KHAPA

Translated by GESHE NGAWANG SAMTEN *and* JAY L. GARFIELD

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This translation is dedicated to His Holiness the Dalai Lama XIV, the Ocean of Wisdom, in gratitude for his boundless compassion and tireless efforts on behalf of the welfare of all sentient beings.

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Translators' Introduction

Homage to Mañjuśrī in gratitude for his inspiration of the great teachers of the Mahāyāna tradition whose insight and care in composing their treatises have made this work possible.

The reader of this translation of an early fifteenth-century Tibetan philosophical text will have to get used to the heavily outlined prose style used by Tsong khapa and other Tibetan scholars in the composition of such texts. So let us get started here. This introduction has five parts: the life and works of Tsong khapa, a discussion of the text and its structure, our methodology, comments on the root text and our translation of it, and our acknowledgments.

1. The Life and Works of Tsong khapa

This section has two parts: a brief biography of Tsong khapa and the principal works of Tsong khapa.

1.1 A brief biography of Tsong khapa

Tsong khapa (whose ordination name was actually bLo bZang Grags pa, /Lobsang Dakpa/ but who is universally known as "Tsong khapa" [the man from Tsong kha] sometimes prefaced with the Tibetan honorific title "rJe" [Lord] or as "rJe Rin po che" [Precious Lord]) was born in Tsong kha in the Amdo region of Tibet in 1357. He studied widely as a young man and was taught by many of the leading scholars of all of the Tibetan traditions of his day, in particular the Sakya masters Red mda ba /Rendawa/ and Rinchen rDo rJe /Rinchen

Dorje/; the Kagyu master sPyan snga Rin po che /Chenga Rinpoche/; and the Jo-nangpa masters Bo dong Phyags las rNam rGyal /Bodong Chakleh Namgyal/, Khyung po Lhas pa /Khyungpo Hlehpa/ and Chos kyi dPal pa /Chökyi Pelpa/.

Tsong khapa was recognized early in life as a scholar and practitioner of enormous promise and deep understanding and even in his youth was widely sought as a teacher. He continued to study throughout his life, and his works demonstrate an enormous mastery of Indian and earlier Tibetan philosophical literature, logic, hermeneutical theory, and tantra, as well as an extraordinarily synoptic mind, a powerful grasp of subtle detail, and the ability to see how small details matter in philosophical exposition. His work always reflects penetrating analytical insight. His career output is enormous, comprising six major treatises and dozens of smaller texts as well as hundreds of brief philosophical and religious poems. His entire corpus comprises eighteen volumes.

Tsong khapa's first principal treatise, *Legs bshad gser 'phreng* /Lekshe serten/, or *The Golden Rosary of Eloquence*, was completed when he was thirty years old, after over a decade of work. It is an extensive and complex text, demonstrating philosophical sympathy for the Yogācāra or Cittamātra (Buddhist idealist) school of philosophy, reflecting Tsong khapa's early scholarly focus on the Maitreya texts foundational to that school and the treatises and commentaries of the great Indian Cittamātra philosophers Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, and Sthiramati. His account of Madhyamaka in that text focuses primarily on its negative dialectical character. While it is an important and profound text, it does not reflect Tsong khapa's mature philosophical views.[1]

During the period following the composition of *The Golden Rosary*, Tsong khapa's attention was focused on the *Prajñāpāramitā (Perfection of Wisdom)* sūtras foundational to the Madhyamaka school, as well as on Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika (Commentary on Dignaga's Encyclopedia of Logic)* and on his continued study of tantra. It is clear that during this time he developed the conviction that motivates much of his work in his later texts: A complete understanding of Buddhist philosophy requires a synthesis of the epistemology and logic of Dharmakīrti with the metaphysics of Nāgārjuna. By fusing these two strands of the Indian Buddhist tradition Tsong khapa works to develop an understanding of the view of reality and of the proper mode of engaging with reality both cognitively and ethically as these are developed in the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras and their commentaries. Tsong khapa argues that the development of a correct view of the ultimate nature of things requires rigorous analytical argument as well as meditative practice; that the deliverances of proper analysis and of proper meditation are completely congruent; and that the prac-

1. For an English translation of part of this text, see Sparham (1993).

tices of study, contemplation, and meditation should be inseparable in a practitioner's life.

Tsong khapa spent most of the years 1390–1398 in extended retreat, often solitary, but sometimes with teachers or colleagues. He reports in his autobiography that at the end of this period of contemplation he was rewarded by a vision of the great Indian Madhyamaka masters, after which he attained complete understanding of the Madhyamaka view as expounded by Nāgārjuna and as interpreted by Āryadeva, Buddhapālita, and Candrakīrti. (The cover illustration of this volume represents that vision.) The major philosophical texts composed in the remaining twenty years of his life develop with great precision and sophistication the view he developed during this long retreat period and reflect his realization that while Madhyamaka philosophy involves a relentlessly negative dialectic—a sustained critique both of reification and of nihilism and a rejection of all concepts of essence—the other side of that dialectic is an affirmation of conventional reality, of dependent origination, and of the identity of the two truths, suggesting a positive view of the nature of reality as well. This insight is articulated in his philosophical poem composed when he emerged from this long retreat period, *Legs bshad snying po /Lekshe nyingpo/ (The [condensed] Essence of Eloquence)* (Thurman 1984).

The last two decades of Tsong khapa's life were enormously productive, both in terms of scholarship and in terms of his lasting contribution to Tibetan monastic and academic culture. In 1409 Tsong khapa inaugurated the annual Mon lam chen mo (Great prayer festival) which has continued to be observed to this day by all Tibetan Buddhist schools, and established the dGe lugs pa /Geluk/ school of Tibetan Buddhism, founded dGa ldan /Ganden/ Monastic University in Lhasa, the first of the "three seats," or major monastic universities, of this order. These universities are still functioning in exile in India, and for five hundred years were among the largest universities in the world, enrolling about ten thousand students each, drawn from all over the Buddhist world.

In 1402 Tsong khapa composed his monumental and encyclopedic treatise on the stages of the Buddhist path from initial engagement with dharma to complete enlightenment, *Lam rim chen mo (Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path)* (Cutler et al. 2000–2004). The text we translate in this volume was composed in 1407–1408, as was his masterful text on Buddhist hermeneutics *Legs bshad snying po /lekshe nyingpo/ (The Essence of Eloquence)* (Thurman 1984, Thab-khas 2001). Tsong khapa passed into mahāparinirvāṇa in 1419. He left behind numerous illustrious students, including his two principal disciples mKhas grub rJe /Khay drup Jay/ and rGyal tshab /Gyeltsab/.

1.2 The principal works of Tsong khapa

Tsong khapa's six major works comprise two independent philosophical treatises, two explicitly commentarial works, and two treatises on practicing the path to enlightenment. But this division is somewhat artificial and misleading. Each of his texts is packed with philosophical argument, each involves extensive commentary on Indian Buddhist texts and discussions of Indian and Tibetan commentaries, and each is concerned with the point of Buddhist philosophy—practicing the Buddhist path to enlightenment.

His two independent treatises are his earliest major treatise, *Legs bshad gser 'phreng,* and his enormously influential (and complex) text on Buddhist hermeneutics, *Legs bshad snying po ([Extensive] Essence of Eloquence).*

Tsong khapa's major treatises on the path are *Lam rim chen mo* and *sNags rim chen mo* /Nahk rim chenmo/ *(Great Exposition of the Tantric Path)*. The former is a complete treatise on all stages of Buddhist practice; the latter specifically addresses the practice, the realizations to be achieved, and the way of life of a tantric practitioner.

The major commentarial treatises include the present text, which is a commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā,* and *dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal (Illumination of the Meaning of the Middle Path),* a subtle and wide-ranging commentary on Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra.*

We include as Appendix III to this volume a bibliography of those works of Tsong khapa now available in English.[2]

2. The Text and Its Structure

The text we offer here is generally known as *rTsa she ṭik chen rigs pa'i rgya mtsho* /Tsashay tikchen rikpeh gyatso/ *(Ocean of Reasoning: A Great Commentary on Nāgārjuna's Mūlamadhyamakakārikā)*, and for that reason that is the title on the cover. But Tsong khapa himself calls it *dBu ma rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa shes rab ces bya ba'i rnam bshad rigs pa'i rgya mtsho* /Uma tsaweh tsik layur chehpa sherab che chaweh namsheh rikpeh gyatso/ *(An Ocean of Reasoning: Commentary to Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, the Text Known as "Wisdom.")*. This is the reason for the difference between the title on the cover of this text and the title inside.

Ocean of Reasoning is of great importance to understanding the Tibetan reception of Madhyamaka philosophy—especially in the dGe lugs school—

2. For more detail on the life of Tsong khapa, see Thurman, *The Life and Teachings of Tsong Kha Pa* or the "Introduction" to *The Central Philosophy of Tibet: Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence.*

and to interpreting Nāgārjuna in light of subsequent philosophical developments in India and Tibet because it is the last truly grand, systematic commentary on this text. Tsong khapa endeavors in *Ocean of Reasoning* not only to comment directly on Nāgārjuna's text, but also to bring to bear all major subsequent commentaries on that text, to adjudicate disputes between earlier commentators, and to show how Buddhist logic and epistemology can be used to interpret Nāgārjuna. It is hence the most philosophically and hermeneutically sophisticated discussion of Nāgārjuna's text in the canonical Buddhist literature and is a true masterpiece of Tibetan philosophy.

While the text is composed as a verse-by-verse commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way)*—albeit with extensive background discussion and exploration of issues raised by that text—it is in some respects also a subcommentary on Candrakīrti's (late sixth century) *Prasannapadā (Lucid Exposition)* and to a lesser extent Buddhapālita's (ca. 470–560) commentary on Nāgārjuna's text *(Mūlamadhyamakakārikāvṛtti [Commentary to Mūlamadhyamakakārikā],* usually referred to simply as *The Buddhapālitī)*. Tsong khapa follows Candrakīrti's text and Buddhapālita's expositions closely, quoting frequently from their commentaries, referring to them frequently, but also often paraphrasing large sections of their commentaries without explicitly saying that he is doing so. Indeed, in reading this text, one is thereby reading, at least in translation and close paraphrase, the bulk of each of those texts.

That is not to say, however, that Tsong khapa simply repeats what these earlier commentators have already said. He comments on, clarifies, elaborates on, and compares and occasionally criticizes their views. He also develops many lines of original analysis and commentary. So the text is not simply a subcommentary on *Prasannapadā,* but stands as an independent commentarial and philosophical work.

Prasannapadā is also composed as a response to earlier commentaries—Buddhapālita's and Bhavaviveka's (early sixth century) *Prajñāpradīpā (Lamp of Wisdom)* and its autocommentary *(Tarkajvalā [Blaze of Argument])*, as well as Avalokitavrata's commentary on *Prajñāpradīpa*. Bhāvaviveka criticizes Buddhapālita's reading of Nāgārjuna on logical grounds, arguing that the reductio arguments Buddhapālita attributes to Nāgārjuna are inadequate to establish the Madhyamaka position because they would not defend positive theses based upon premises acceptable to the Madhyamaka.

Candrakīrti defends Buddhapālita through a subtle analysis of the structure of reductio arguments, making use of a distinction between two distinct logical forms a sentence expressing a negation might have, and of nuanced account of the logical form of the conclusions of the Madhyamaka dialectic. Tsong khapa presents in the first chapter a detailed exploration of the debate between these three great Indian commentators, defending Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti and arguing that the implications of what look like a narrow logical

squabble are immense for a proper understanding of Madhyamaka and of its account of emptiness. He argues that only by adopting Candrakīrti's reading can one understand emptiness to be empty, dependent arising and emptiness to be equivalent, and only thus can the mādhyamika establish the emptiness of all phenomena and the reality of dependent origination through reductio arguments aimed at the refutation of positions according to which phenomena have essence. This discussion in the first chapter is complex and technical but rewards careful reading, and it is essential to bear the results of this chapter in mind to understand Tsong khapa's readings of the later chapters.

Our translation deviates in one important way from the original. Tsong khapa includes three major topics in the first chapter: his preliminary explanation of the text as a whole, his commentary on Nāgārjuna's homage verses, and his commentary on the first chapter itself. The result is a single chapter comprising nearly one-fifth of the entire text, with a complex structure. For clarity of exposition we have divided this into three chapters, one for each of these principal topics.

Tsong khapa devotes a chapter to each of Nāgārjuna's twenty-seven chapters in addition to a dedication section and a brief afterward. He outlines the text carefully, offering a reading of the logical structure of the text as a whole. We reproduce that outline down to the chapter level after this introduction. It is important to bear this outline in mind in order to see how Tsong khapa reads the structure of Nāgārjuna's argument and how he sees the place of each chapter in that argument.

3. Methodology

This section has three parts: translation policies, texts consulted, and the outlines.

3.1 Translation policies

Turning *rTsa she ṭik chen rigs pa'i rgya mtsho* into *Ocean of Reasoning* has been no easy task. The Tibetan and English languages simply are not designed for each other. Finding words or phrases in one language with similar semantic range to those in the other is often nearly impossible. We try to be relatively consistent in our choices of terms while remaining flexible enough to allow context to determine alternate readings of a word; we try to balance preserving lexical resonance or syntactic devices against semantic precision; we try to produce readable English from readable Tibetan. All of this has proved very challenging. We were constantly reminded of the Italian proverb: *Traditori Traduitori!*

This text poses some special problems: Tsong khapa often writes very long sentences—sometimes a single sentence will go for a page. We have usually broken these into many English sentences in order to make the text readable. But this often requires, in order to represent relations between the new sentences that were once encoded gramatically, the insertion of lexical material. Sometimes there is no way to break these sentences, and the result will be some rather awkward English constructions. While we have tried to remain as lexically close to the source text as possible consistent with clarity in English, we have taken a few more liberties with grammar. In some cases we have also departed from lexical precision in order to make the same point in more natural English prose. Tibetan permits deletions in places where English does not and longer anaphoric relations between pronouns and their antecedents. In these cases we have had to supply deleted material or to replace pronouns with appropriate noun phrases.

In all of these cases, we have tried to ask ourselves this question: Had Tsong khapa been writing in modern philosophical English, how would he have put this point? This is *not* the closely related question: Had Tsong khapa been writing in English in the early twenty-first century how would he have put this point? And it is *certainly* not the question: Had Tsong khapa been writing for an early twenty-first century Western-educated, English-speaking audience, how would he have put this point?

To translate with this last question in mind would be to rewrite the text entirely—to write a new text arguing in contemporary philosophical terms for Tsong khapa's positions and interpretations. To keep the second question in mind would certainly produce a more fluent text, but it would create anachronistic arguments, create anachronistic formulations of points, reflect anachronistic presuppositions, and would substantially alter the literary style of the text. We have tried to preserve as much of Tsong khapa's style as possible, and have tried to present this text as what it is, an early fifteenth-century Tibetan scholastic commentary on a second-century Indian text, while presenting it in contemporary English. We have therefore striven neither to make it more philosophically familiar, nor less culturally or temporally alien. The text demands that the reader open himself or herself to a distant philosophical perspective and to take seriously the philosophical concerns and approaches of a scholar writing in a different time and a different cultural context, but we hope that it does not require that a reader of contemporary English learn a new *language* in order to read the translation.

Tibetan technical philosophical, logical, and religious terms pose special difficulties. Sometimes these have no precise English equivalents and require the use of circumlocutory phrases or awkward neologisms. We have tried to minimize this, as the use of such phrases may convey the sense that the original is neologistic or circumlocutory without generating any additional clarity. There are also terms that have developed standard translations in what has

come to be called "Buddhist Hybrid English" that simply do not convey much, if anything, to those not already conversant with the original Sanskrit or Tibetan. Many of these terms have been fixed by translators with backgrounds in philology or religious studies who may not be fully conversant with the technical philosophical and logical issues addressed in this vocabulary. Often it turns out that in the case of philosophical and logical terms, these in fact have reasonably precise equivalents in English. Where this is so, we have deviated from standard Buddhological translation practice and have opted for the English technical vocabulary. We hope, after all, to be presenting a philosophical text to philosophers. At other times, we have simply used standard translations where these seem to be reasonably in order.

Our glossaries (appendices 1 and 2) are limited: We have included terms where we take ourselves to have done something unusual, either to call critical attention to our choice in the hope of inspiring some debate or in order to suggest a policy to future translators. Where our translation choices are either fairly standard, presumably uncontroversial, or just not very interesting, we have not bothered with glossary entries.

The Western reader, we predict, will find this text very difficult going. There will be an inevitable temptation to think that the "fault" lies in our opaque translation. At the risk of sounding defensive, we point out here that this text is very difficult to read in Tibetan. The philosophical and interpretative arguments are often complex and are occasionally simply unclear. The sentences are so long and their grammar so intricate that they often take a long time for native Tibetan readers to parse. A lot of background in Buddhist learning is presupposed by the text, and references can often be very oblique.

While we hope that we have not made the text any *more* difficult in English than it is in Tibetan, we have also not tried to make it any *less* difficult. In many places it has been tempting to rewrite for greater conceptual clarity, as opposed to greater lexical clarity. We have resisted that temptation to editorial license. In many cases it has been tempting to write explanatory footnotes explaining how an argument goes or why Tsong khapa makes a particular point. We have even been tempted to preface the translation with a long interpretative essay. But we have resisted these commentarial impulses as well.

There are three reasons for this. First, we are lazy. If we were to begin explaining everything that might need explanation, the task would be endless, and the book would double in size. We would be essentially writing a sub-subcommentary. Second, we do want to present the text to the reader as Tsong khapa presented it, and he did not include such footnotes. Third, sometimes we might in fact be wrong about what is going on and we do not want to foist our errors on our unsuspecting readers! Due to our own imperfections we are certain that there are many places at which our translation could have been smoother and more accurate. We apologize for all of our errors and for any false impression they create regarding this text.

While trying to keep the text as uncluttered as possible by extraneous matter, we have included footnotes of two main types. Some notes point out variants of texts, special translational problems, or unusual translation choices. We also include some notes that provide background information, necessary for understanding the passage in question, that might not be widely known by Western readers not conversant with Buddhist philosophy. We have tried, however, to limit these notes to places where they are absolutely essential and we have not indicated all of the many concordances with earlier commentaries. This would quickly become tedious, and those with access to those texts do not need this translation in any case.

3.2 Texts consulted

The edition of *rTsa she ṭik chen* from which we worked is that published in 1987 by the Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Press in Sarnath, now unfortunately out of print. It is, however, the version of the text most widely used by scholars of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, and the boldface bracketed page numbers in the text refer to that edition. In cases of uncertainty or of downright typographical error we consulted both the Lhasa and the bKra shis Lhun po /Tashi Hlunpo/ editions of the text.

We used the sDe dge editions of all Indian canonical texts in Tibetan, referring to the Tibetan editions always in the first instance, as versions Tsong khapa was reading in Tibetan. Where the Tibetan was ambiguous or obscure, we referred to the Sanskrit edition of *Prasannapadā* for clarification of Candrakīrti's or Nāgārjuna's words, and in the case of sūtras cited in Tibetan for which Sanskrit or Pali texts are available we checked questionable readings against the Sanskrit or Pali. On the other hand, where Sanskrit and Tibetan editions were at odds—where the canonical Tibetan translation is in fact incorrect—while we note the discrepancy in translators' footnotes, we follow the Tibetan in our translation to remain consistent with Tsong khapa's reading.

All volume and page references are to the sDe dge edition of the bsTan 'gyur /Tengyur/. Where chapter/verse citation has become common for texts such as *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā, Śūnyatāsaptati, Ratnāvalī, Catuḥśataka,* or *Madhyamakāvatāra* and many others, we have used this form where Tibetan and English editions of these texts set in verse form are readily available.

3.3 The outlines

This section has two parts: what outlines are in Tibetan texts, and how we handle them in this text.

3.3.1 What outlines are in Tibetan texts

Tibetan Buddhist philosophical and religious texts are heavily outlined. They are divided into sections, subsections, sub-subsections, etc. This does indeed help the reader to see the overall structure of the presentation or argument. But the outlines themselves can be hard to follow as they are presented in the texts. At the beginning of each subdivided section, there will be an outline passage that goes something like this: The first [section] has two [sections]: The presentation of the argument, and the refutation of objections. The first has three: the presentation of the premises, stating the conclusion, explaining the example. The first has three, etc. . . . First. Then a few pages later we find, "The second has two parts, etc . . ." followed by the first part of the first part of the second part. By the time one has gone a few more pages and hits a few more "Seconds," it is easy to get confused about whether one is in the second part of the second part of the third part of the first part, or in the second part of the second part of the first, let alone what the part was called, or where it all fits in the big picture. It is also hard to put all of the scattered outline material together to get a sense of the overall structure of the text.

3.3.2 How we approach them

This section has two parts: how we approach the chapters, and how we approach the text as a whole.

3.3.2.1 How we approach the chapters

We have approached the outlines by providing the outline information in several forms so that it is easy to navigate the text and to find one's bearings no matter where one is in this ocean. First, we provide a complete outline of each chapter at the beginning of the chapter, so that its overall structure can be seen at a glance. Second, we translate all of the outline prose as it is presented in the text, so as to preserve the style of the original and so that one can see how the text subdivides as one reads. Third, using a decimal numbering system, we reproduce the section numbers and their titles at the beginning of each section.

3.3.2.2 How we approach the text as a whole

So much for the outline of each chapter. But in fact, the entire text is outlined as a whole, with the chapters each assigned to places in the outline. Since the

relevant outline prose may be hundreds of pages from a chapter it governs, it is doubly hard to make sense of the overall structure from the prose alone. To solve this problem, we also provide an overall outline down to the chapter level before the entire text, indicating the place of each chapter in the structure of the text. It is worth referring to this outline when starting a new chapter to get a sense of where one is in the text.

In addition, we have expanded the brief heading statements at the beginning of each chapter, bringing forward outline information collated from all of the outline prose governing each chapter to construct a summary outline paragraph explaining just where one is in the text. One should take these paragraphs as well as the summary outlines and the section headers as our interpolations. But they are always interpolations constructed by assembling the relevant prose from elsewhere in the text. We hope that the greater ease of navigation will make up for this slight distortion of the original form of presentation.

4. The Root Text and Its Translation

This section has two parts: Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and revisions of the translation.

4.1 Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*

Nāgārjuna is easily the most important philosophical figure in the Buddhist world after the historical Buddha himself. He probably lived during the first or second century of the common era in South India, but very little is known about his life despite the availability of several traditional hagiographies. There is considerable debate concerning whether all of the texts traditionally attributed to Nāgārjuna are composed by the same person, and some argue that there are in fact two or even three Nāgārjunas. But there is clearly one who is the author of a set of terse but powerfully argued philosophical works that are the foundational texts for the Madhyamaka school of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and Nāgārjuna is regarded as a founding figure of every Mahāyāna school in Asia from the Tibetan schools through Japanese Zen. His principal philosophical texts are *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, Vigrahavyāvartanī (Reply to Objections), Yuktiṣaṣṭikā (Sixty Verses of Reasoning), Śūnyatāsaptati (Seventy Verses on Emptiness)*, and *Ratnāvalī (Jeweled Garland)*. The last of these is written as advice to a king and is addressed primarily to a lay audience. The others are scholarly philosophical texts.

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā is the most important of Nāgārjuna's texts. It is the subject of major commentaries by the Indian scholars Buddhapālita, Bhā-

vaviveka, Avalokitavrata, and Candrakīrti, and many more commentaries in Tibet. It is cited widely in subsequent Buddhist literature, and debates about how to interpret it define differences between major Buddhist philosophical schools. It has been translated not only into all non-Indian Mahāyāna canons, but also a number of times into Western languages, with five English translations appearing in the last few decades. It is, however, a very difficult text to read and to interpret, and modern interpreters differ among themselves about the correct way to read it at least as much as canonical interpreters. Nāgārjuna has been read as an idealist (Murti 1960), a nihilist (Wood 1994), a skeptic (Garfield 1995), a pragmatist (Kalupahana 1986), and as a mystic (Streng 1967). He has been regarded as a critic of logic (Inada 1970), as a defender of classical logic (Hayes 1994), and as a pioneer of paraconsistent logic (Garfield and Priest 2003).

In twenty-seven chapters of philosophical verse, Nāgārjuna develops a powerful critique of the idea that things have essences, arguing instead that all phenomena are empty of essence. He develops a doctrine of two truths. The ultimate truth is that all phenomena are empty of essence. The conventional truth is the ordinary empirical truth about the world. However, the distinction between the two truths is emphatically not an appearance/reality distinction: They are two *truths*, not a truth and a falsehood.

Nāgārjuna is able to maintain this ontological tightrope act in virtue of his argument that emptiness itself is empty, and is hence neither more nor less real than any conventional phenomenon; it is not an essence, but the absence of any essence. Moreover, emptiness, Nāgārjuna argues, is nothing but the fact that phenomena are dependently arisen—that every entity depends for its existence on causes and conditions, upon its parts, upon the wholes to which it belongs, and for its identity on nominal and conceptual imputation and conventions.

The emptiness of all phenomena, the emptiness of that emptiness, and the identities of emptiness with dependent arising and of the conventional and ultimate truth are the central ontological principles of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. Nāgārjuna argues that this doctrine of emptiness is a middle path between two extreme positions: reificationism and nihilism. To reify phenomena is to regard them as existing with essences, as existing independently. To be nihilistic is to take the fact that they are empty of essence and exist merely dependently as their complete nonexistence, and hence to regard empirical reality as entirely false.

Nāgārjuna's methodology is the use of reductio arguments to demonstrate that neither of these extreme positions is tenable—that each collapses into incoherence, even by the lights of its own proponents. The interpretation of these reductio arguments, and of the degree to which the mādhyamika endorses their conclusions, is a matter of hot dispute between Buddhapālita, Bhāvaviveka, and Candrakīrti, and Tsong khapa devotes much of the first chap-

ter of the text to a careful examination of this debate. Though this material is highly technical, it is essential in order to understand his interpretation of the remainder of the text. It is important to bear in mind that for Nāgārjuna the use of reductio arguments is no mere rhetorical device, but reflects his commitment to refraining from characterizing any nature of things because of his commitment to the incoherence of the very *idea* of the nature of things. But just how this dialectic works and just how far one should go in reading Nāgārjuna as refraining from asserting that things have any nature is a matter of hot debate, not only in classical India and Tibet, but among contemporary scholars.

Rather than develop and explain these doctrines here, and rather than take sides in these debates, we invite the reader to explore the text itself with Tsong khapa. The reader who wishes to read more recent literature on Nāgārjuna should consult Garfield (1995, 2000), Kalupahana (1986), Williams (1989), Sprung (1979), Streng (1967), Murti (1960), Lindtner (1986), Tuck (1990), Hopkins (1983, 1987), Napper (2003), or Walser (2005).

4.2 Revisions of the translation

One of us (Garfield) has published an earlier translation of and commentary on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Garfield 1995). The present translation of the root text differs in many places from that earlier translation. There are three reasons for these differences. First, we sometimes simply hit on more felicitous ways to put the verses in English.

Second, it was often necessary to adjust what would have been a perfectly good rendering of a root verse in order to make it consistent with Tsong khapa's commentary. There are two reasons for this. First, sometimes distinct translation choices reflect choices between different shades of meaning or emphasis. It is necessary when translating these verses in the context of Tsong khapa's commentary in these cases to reflect the nuances that follow his reading. More frequently, though, we were forced to make changes because Tsong khapa frequently glosses verses word by word. In these cases, a translation, whenever possible, must include a lexical item corresponding to each lexical item Tsong khapa identifies. At these times, we have sacrificed what might have been a smoother translation of the root verse for an alternative that allows the reader to make sense of these word-by-word glosses. Translation is always a matter of balancing many constraints, and where one is translating a text with a commentary, the commentary perforce constrains the translation of the root text.

Finally, and most embarrassingly, there were errors in the translation of Garfield (1995). We have corrected them. We hereby jointly advise that this translation supersedes Garfield's earlier one.

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Reflecting on all that so many sentient beings have contributed to this work reminds us of the truth of dependent arising and of the great debt that each of us owes to so many others.

Ocean of Reasoning

Tsong khapa's General Outline of the Text

1. Preliminary Explanation (Preliminary Explanation)
2. Principal Explanation (Homage–Prostration)
   - 2.1 Meaning of the title of the text (Homage)
   - 2.2 Content of the text (Homage–27)
     - 2.2.1 Praising the Buddha for teaching dependent origination free from the extremes (Homage)
     - 2.2.2 How to interpret dependent origination as free from the eight extremes (Homage–27)
       - 2.2.2.1 The explanation of the order of the chapters (Homage)
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         - 2.2.2.2.1 Demonstration that the dependently originated is empty by nature (1–26)
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               - 2.2.2.2.1.1.1.1 Refutation of the essence of phenomena through the examination of the mechanism and power of cause and effect (1)
               - 2.2.2.2.1.1.1.2 Refutation of the essence of the person through the examination of going and coming and of action and agent (2)
             - 2.2.2.2.1.1.2 Extensive Explanation of Selflessness (3–23)
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2.2.2.2.2 How, once one understands dependent origination, the erroneous views are abandoned (27)
2.2.3 Prostration to the teacher in gratitude for his kindness (Prostration)
3. Afterword

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NAMO BUDDHĀYA

An Ocean of Reasoning

Commentary to Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, *the Text Known as "Wisdom"*

[1] I prostrate with veneration to the lotus feet of the Lord Mañjuśrī.

May I be sustained by the Victor
Who is universally praised by the wise
As the crown of all teachers
For teaching emptiness of essence as the meaning of dependent arising.

I take refuge in the Lord of the treasure of wisdom
Who, seeing that discourse as the heart of all of the scriptures,
Through this profound discourse, exhilarates
The universal assembly of bodhisattvas.

May Nāgārjuna, the sun among teachers, be victorious,
Who, having identified countless areas of perplexity,
Which could divert one from the definitive meaning of the teachings,
Then refutes them eloquently;

And, who, providing unsurpassed ascertainment of that system
Through countless shining beams of argument—
Various proofs and refutations—
Dispels the thick darkness at the heart of grasping the extremes.

I venerate the upholders of the traditions of the great charioteer,
The noble Āryadeva and Āryaśūra, and the rest,
Who have properly preserved the supreme system
And who have extensively illuminated the doctrine of the sage.

Just like the savior in the night—the moon—among the constellations,
The system of the masters Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti
Shines most radiantly of all the commentators'.
Even when I recollect them my hairs stand on end.

By relying on the lotus feet, my enemy—ignorance—is completely **[2]**
Vanquished through his illumination of the path of reason.
May I still be sustained until the end of cyclic existence
Through the marvelous acts of the supreme guide, the teacher.

I am pleased to comment on this profound middle path
Having been requested to do so by many spiritual friends
Who aspire to ascertain the definitive meaning
And by the illustrious ruler of the kingdom.

Although those who are satisfied by the mere term "definitive meaning,"
And those who are contented just by a glimpse of partial meaning,
And those in whom the desire for practice arises from the heart,
But who relinquish these important treatises, may not want this,

Having eloquently dispelled the darkness of confusion
By the lamp of perfect reasoning, and having resolved all misconceptions
Regarding the meaning of the Prajñāpāramitā, the heart of the definitive scriptures,
Which is the path on which countless yogis tread,

For those wise ones who wish to contemplate Nāgārjuna's purport as it is,
By means of decisive views regarding how things stand,
I will now eloquently comment on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*.
So, listen with veneration!

Preliminary Explanations

Outline of Preliminary Explanations

1. Necessity and Manner of Investigating the Way Things Really Are
2. Greatness of the Author of the Text
3. The Articulation of His Treatises
4. The Benefits of Aspiring to the Profound Dharma
5. Identifying the Vessel into which the Profound Dharma Can Be Introduced

The preliminary explanation is the first of two parts of this commentary, the second of which is the principal explanation. This chapter has five parts: the necessity and manner of investigating the way things really are, the greatness of the author of the text, the articulation of his treatises, the benefits of aspiring to the profound Dharma, and identifying the vessel into which the profound Dharma can be introduced.[1]

1. Necessity and Manner of Investigating the Way Things Really Are

Everything the buddhas have said about generosity and other similar virtues is a means to cultivate the wisdom that comprehends the way things really are

1. We have divided Tsong khapa's first chapter into three, placing the preliminary explanations and the commentary on the homage verses into separate chapters in the translation for greater clarity of exposition, and have separated their outlines accordingly. The reader should be aware that in the Tibetan text, all three of these English chapters are comprised in a single large first chapter.

for those who have not cultivated it and to stabilize and continue its development for those who have already cultivated it. Therefore, *Bodhicāryāvatāra* says:

All the branches of the teachings are taught by the Sage
For the cultivation of wisdom. **[3]**
Therefore, those who wish to pacify suffering
Should cultivate wisdom. [IX: 1]

Therefore, since all the teachings are directly or indirectly devoted to establishing the way things are, the highest obligation of the wise person is to seek the absolutely clear eye of wisdom which ascertains the way things really are, *viz.*, dependent origination. Such things as generosity lead to the city of liberation, just as a group of blind people are led to their destination by a skillful guide. This is how this profound meaning is elegantly interpreted by the masters who have been prophesied to expound it. Their hermeneutical methods are these: In virtue of the fact that many different teachings—some definitive and some requiring interpretations—are provided in accordance with the abilities of different disciples, doubts arise regarding which of these teachings are to be taken literally and which are not. So the meaning of the Buddha's teaching should be investigated following a system completely justified by arguments that literally demonstrate how the scriptures of the teacher are to be taken, that they are not to be taken otherwise, that undermine alternative interpretations, and also through arguments against other interpretations. This is the instruction given unanimously by all the great charioteers.

2. Greatness of the Author of the Text

As it is said in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*:

The vehicle of discriminative wisdom
Is not subject to the comprehension of sophists.
After the passing away of the protector,
Please tell, who would hold the tradition thereafter? [*mDo sde* ca, 165b]

Thus the Buddha was asked who, after his demise, would maintain the vehicle—the object of the discriminative wisdom of meditative equipoise—that is free from verbal and conceptual elaboration. The Buddha replies:

You, the wise man, should know
That after the parinirvāṇa of the Buddha,
The holder of the system will come
After some time has passed.

In the land of Vidarbha in the South,
One widely renowned as "the monk Śrī," **[4]**

Who will be named "Nāga,"
Destroying the positions of nihilism and reificationism.

He will propound my vehicle in the world,
The supreme Mahāyāna,
Will achieve the ground of joyfulness and
He will than ascend to the Blissful Land. [*mDo sde* ca, 165b]

Thus the Buddha said that the definitive vehicle, free from both nihilism and reificationism, would be propounded by Nāgārjuna. This, as said in the *Suvarṇaprabhās-sūtra*, is the reincarnation of the Licchavī, who was, during the Buddha's time, called Sarvalokapriyadarśana because in the *Mahāmegha* the Buddha says:

> Four hundred years after my passing away, this boy will become a monk named "Nāga" and will disseminate my doctrine; eventually he will become the Victor named *Jñānākāraprabhā* in the land called *Prasāda Prabhā*. [*rGyud* Pa, 159a, Pha 4b–5a]

In *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* of the Action Tantric School, the time of advent and the name are the same but it is said that he would live for six hundred years. The *Mahābherihārakaparivarta-sūtra* says:

> After the teacher's passing away, when the human life span becomes eighty years and his doctrine declines, this Licchavī boy Sarvalokapriyadarśana will become a monk holding the teacher's name and will disseminate the doctrine. He will die after completing one hundred years, and will be born in the Blissful Land. [*mDo sde* dza, 100b]

Atiśa Dīpaṅkara and Bodhibhadra also maintain that this passage is a prediction of the master, which is based on the traditional belief that the Licchavī boy and Nāgārjuna are of same personal continuum. It is said that the prediction in *Mahādundubhi* is for his final appearance in the South. Therefore, his emergence after four hundred years is his second appearance in the South. The *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* and *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* say that he would proceed to the Blissful Land after attaining the first ground. **[5]** But in the *Mahādundubhi* the monk is said to be of the seventh ground. The predictions in *Mahāmegha* and *Mahādundubhi* that he would be enlightened in the future are for the enlightenment of the manifested body in the desire realm. But this does not contradict the statement in the *Pradīpodyotana-ṭīkā* [*rGyud* ha 200a] that Nāgārjuna attained the status of Vajradhara in that very life through the path of supreme yoga, because these are similar to the statements that the teacher Śākyamuni would achieve enlightenment when the human life span would be one hundred, and that he achieved enlightenment several eons back, which do not contradict each other. If a great person like this teacher, who lived six hundred

years, could not be enlightened through the supreme yoga, then the claim in the supreme tantra that a superior practitioner can achieve the status of Vajradhara would be idle words. Thus, the statement in the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* [*dBu ma* ya 2b] that this teacher had not completed his activity is in accordance with the path of Prajñāpāramitā vehicle alone.

3. The Articulation of His Treatises

This master has written many treatises like *Yogaśataka*, in secular fields, and on studies of inner phenomena, particularly tantra and the *Prajñāpāramitā*. He presents the profound middle path as definitive through authoritative sources by citations in *Sūtrasamuccaya* [*dBu ma* ki 187a, 193b] of many sūtras like the *One Hundred Thousand Verse Prajñāpāramitā* and those from the bodhisattva literature, and he establishes it by providing numerous arguments in the six treatises: *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, Śūnyatāsaptati, Vigrahavyāvartanī, Yuktiṣaṣṭikā, Vaidalyasūtra* and *Ratnāvalī*. Some of his paeans discuss emptiness, but not many of them present arguments.

These treatises are of two primary kinds: those which demonstrate the way things really are—free from two extremes of existence and nonexistence—and **[6]** those which demonstrate that the path free from these extreme views leads to liberation. The former is demonstrated in two ways: *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* refutes the thesis concocted by the reificationists, *viz.*, that persons and phenomena have essences; *Vaidalyasūtra* refutes the Nyāiyayika's use of their sixteen categories, such as authoritative cognition, to prove that they do.

Vigrahavyāvartanī responds to the following argument:

> If all phenomena lacked essence
> Your words also would lack essence.
> Thus the essence of all things
> Cannot be rejected. [I: 1]

which is offered against

> The essence of phenomena
> Does not exist in conditions, etc. [*MMK* I: 3ab]

Therefore, it is a supplement to the first chapter of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*. This shows that the meaning of words being empty of essence is that they are dependently originated, and it states that despite lacking essence words can prove a thesis and refute that which is to be refuted. Thus it demonstrates that the agent and action of establishing and denying authoritative cognition and object make sense in the system asserting essencelessness. Moreover, it shows that for a school positing essence, such things as authoritative cognition do not make any sense.

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā demonstrates that without essence agency and action make complete sense. Nevertheless, in *Vigrahavyāvartanī*, having shown emphatically that agent and action of proof and refutation make sense, the idea that in this system one cannot establish one's own position is dismissed. *Śūnyatāsaptati* is composed in response to an argument against the statement in the seventh chapter of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*:

Like a dream, like an illusion,
Like a city of Gandharvas,
So have arising, enduring
And ceasing been explained. [VII: 34]

Hence, that text is a supplement to the treatise. It is argued by some that the refutation of the essence of arising, endurance, and destruction is incorrect since authoritative sources mention these things. **[7]** *Śūnyatāsaptati* says:

The Buddha asserts that there is or is not arising, endurance, and destruction;
And that things are lower, equal, or higher
In accordance with worldly convention;
But not in accordance with reality. [1]

Thus it responds that the Buddha presents arising, destruction, etc., all in concordance with ordinary people, but not as existing in reality. After extensively refuting essence in such things as arising, that treatise says:

All things are
Empty by nature.
Therefore, the unexcelled Tathāgata
Taught the dependent origination of phenomena.

That is the supreme meaning.
The Buddha, relying on worldly conventions,
States that all the various phenomena are
In reality designated. [68–69]

The ultimate mode of existence of things is nothing but their emptiness of essence—that is, their being dependently originated. Hence, it is explained that all such things as arising are established as imputed through the power of convention. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* says:

The teachings of the buddhas are
Based on two truths. [XXIV: 10ab]

Although this also shows that emptiness of essence is the ultimate, and that such things as arising are all conventionally existent, if it is not spelled out in the previous manner, the meaning of "conventional existence" would

not be understood to be established as *existent merely through the force of nominal convention*. Having offered many arguments against the nonemptiness of essence he thus establishes essencelessness for the purpose of showing that all these various things exist in virtue of nominal conventions, and that in this system agency and action are possible. *Śūnyatāsaptati* is composed to help those who have not understood this.

The other two texts show that in order to be freed from cyclic existence the path abandoning the two extremes of existence and nonexistence is necessary. **[8]** *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* says:

> One does not achieve liberation through reification.
> Nor does one free oneself from cyclic existence through nihilism. [4ab]

Showing that there is no liberation for those who are fallen into the extremes of reification and nihilism, it further says:

> By thoroughly understanding existence and nonexistence,
> The great beings obtain liberation. [4cd]

This demonstrates that the exalted beings achieve liberation from cyclic existence by understanding nonerroneously the reality of existence and nonexistence. Since neither of these can exist without depending on the other, their reality is to not have an essence established through their own nature.

Some argue that since the Buddha has said that samsara—an entity—and nirvana—a nonentity—exist, it makes no sense that they lack essence. In response to that the Buddha has said that they exist in accordance with the mode of perception of an ordinary person's conventional consciousness, but not in accordance with an exalted being's mode of perception of reality. The attainment of nirvana is said to be the realization of cessation—at the state of fruition—through the wisdom by means of which one understands completely that cyclic existence is not essentially arisen.

On the contrary, if the attainment of nirvana were posited as the extinction of afflictions that exist through their own characteristics and the non-arising of further aggregates this would be refuted on the grounds that in that case none of these—neither the realization of cessation, *viz*. nirvana, nor the extinction of afflictive emotions and aggregates—would be possible. This is the meaning of authoritative sources expounding the nirvana of the lesser vehicle as well. The rest of this treatise is written in support of this proposition. In short, if the realization and attainment of nirvana at the stage of achieving arhathood do not imply the realization of the way things really are, that is, ultimate truth, then the attainment of nirvana would absolutely not be possible. This is the principal reason that this fact is proved primarily through citations of the sūtras of the lesser vehicle.

Ratnāvalī demonstrates that the means to achieve high status is confident reliance **[9]** and that, having cultivated that quality, one becomes a vessel of

wisdom, which is the means to achieving definitive goodness [I: 4–5]. Wisdom is the understanding that neither the self nor being-possessed-by-the-self is ultimately existent; and, consequent upon this, that when the aggregates are understood as not truly existent, then self-grasping is extinguished [I: 28–30]. Until the grasping of the aggregates as truly existent is extinguished one does not escape from cyclic existence, but once it is extinguished one escapes [I: 35]. Through the view of nihilism one falls into lower realms; through the view of reificationism one may wander in higher realms; in order to transcend both, one must understand the meaning of "reality"—that is, one must not rely on the two extremes of existence and nonexistence [I: 57]. That meaning is this: Since the person is imputed on the basis of the concatenation of six elements and since it exists neither as identical to nor as different from them, it does not exist in reality. The aggregates and elements should also be examined in just this way [I: 80–83].

The demonstration of the way things really are—dependent origination—through the negation of essence in the person and in phenomena—is also found frequently in both this and in the previous treatise. However, these demonstrations are also part of the primary argument showing that the path to liberation from cyclic existence absolutely requires the understanding of the meaning of reality, which does not rely on the two extremes.

Mūlamadhyamakakārikā and *Śūnyatāsaptati* also show that the path realizing the way things really are eliminates ignorance, and that thereafter the rest of the limbs are eliminated. Nevertheless, it appears that although these texts primarily establish the object—the way things really are, that is, dependent origination—they do not primarily establish the subjective consciousness comprehending the way things really are as the cause of liberation. That is because the former is more difficult to understand.

To summarize all of this: While *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and *Vaidalyasūtra* expound the way things really are—dependent origination—extensively refuting the opponent's theses and proofs, the *Vigrahavyāvartanī* shows the cogency of the Madhyamaka theory of action and agent against the argument of the antagonists who think that since refutation and establishment are not possible **[10]** in the system of those who refute in this way, that refutation of another's position and propounding one's own thesis would not be possible. The fact established by refutation and proof—dependent origination, absence of existence through a thing's own essence—is the ultimate reality. Therefore, when *Śūnyatāsaptati* explains the meaning of "conventional existence" to be *establishment of all the diverse phenomena through nominal engagement* [69], it becomes comprehensible that all actions and agents make sense in terms of convention, the meaning of which is *to be merely nominally designated*. The two other treatises show that such an understanding of the modes of existence of the two truths is indispensable to attaining freedom from cyclic existence, let alone for achieving buddhahood. The great master is very gracious, since he

provides eyes for all those who enter into the paths of the greater and lesser vehicles. Among all these treatises the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is the supreme, as it convincingly and extensively establishes the profound meaning with diverse arguments.

4. The Benefits of Aspiring to the Profound Dharma

Those who aspire towards such Dharma are to be applauded. The *Sūtrasamuccaya* says:

> Through aspiration towards the profound Dharma all merits are accumulated, because it accomplishes all mundane and supramundane benefits until one attains enlightenment, as the *Dārakaratnadattasūtra* says, "Mañjuśrī, the unskilled bodhisattva who practices the six perfections for hundreds and thousands of eons is exceeded in terms of the merits he cultivates by one who listens to this Dharma with dubious mind—let alone by one who listens without doubt; and by one who inscribes and orally transmits it, and carries it, and teaches others extensively." [*dBu ma* khi 205a][2]
>
> In *Vajracchedikā* the Lord asks **[11]**.
>
> Subhūti, what do you think? If there were as many banks of the river Ganga as there are the number of grains of sand are in the river Ganga wouldn't there be very many grains of sand on those banks?
>
> Subhūti responds,
>
> Lord, the number of grains of sand on the banks of the river Ganga itself is very many, let alone the number of grains of sand there would be on as many banks as there are grains of sand in the river.
>
> The Lord further says,
>
> Subhūti, I instruct you and you should understand this: If some men and women fill up as many worlds as there are grains of sand on as many banks as there are grains of sand in the river with seven kinds of jewels and offer them to the Tathāgata, would the men and women achieve much merit?
>
> Subhuti replies,

2. This sūtra has been lost in the original, and was not translated into Tibetan. We have only its citations in *Sūtrasamuccaya*.

> Lord, they would achieve a great deal of merit. Great sage, that would be a great amount.

The Lord then says,

> Those who grasp even a stanza from this kind of dharma and share it with others would achieve far more merit than those people. [*Sher phyin sna tshogs* ka 125a][3]

In the *Tathāgatakośa-sūtra,* after recounting the ten major unwholesome deeds, it is said that the sentient beings who live that way but who engage with the dharma of selflessness and confidently aspire to see all phenomena to be primordially perfect will not migrate into the lower realms [in *Śikṣāsamuccaya dBu ma khi* 96b].[4] The *Māradamanaparipṛccha* says,[5]

> The monk who understands that all dharmas are completely pacified, and who understands the voidness of essence of the extreme of the origin of the infractions, who atones for the infractions committed and expiates them nullifies even the actions with immediate results. So, what is a minor breach of propriety or a ritual omission? [in *Sūtrasamuccaya dBu ma* khi 206b; original source, *Mañjuśrīvikurvaṇaparivarta-sūtra, mDo sde* kha 251a]

[12] In *Ajātaśatru-sūtra* the Buddha says

> I would not even call the karma of those who have committed the acts with immediate results[6] but who listen to this holy dharma, engage with it and aspire to understand it "the karma of obscuration." [*mDo sde* sa 167b]

These are the sources as quoted by the master Nāgārjuna.

5. Identifying the Vessel into which the Profound Dharma Can Be Introduced

Some listen to discourses on emptiness and abandon it without aspiration and therefore wander into lower realms; others, despite having aspiration, mistak-

3. Different editions of this sūtra vary slightly from one another in wording, but not in any consequential ways.

4. This sūtra has been lost and there is no Tibetan translation.

5. This sūtra is also called the *Mañjuśrīvīkurvaṇaparivata-sūtra*.

6. The five immediate karmas, sins, or evil acts are killing one's mother, killing one's father, killing an Arhant, causing schism in the Sangha of bhiksus, and drawing blood from a Tathāgata with evil intent. The point here is that these five types of action (hence karma) result in a situation where one goes *immediately* to the hells upon death. There is no intervening (mtshams med pa) bardo experience (the intermediate state occurring between rebirths).

enly take "emptiness" to mean *nothingness* and so deprecate it. Therefore, teachers should teach depending on their understanding the specific aspirations of their students. *Madhyamakāvatāra* tells what the signs are by means of which this can be known:

> Even when at the stage of an ordinary being, when he hears about emptiness
> He continuously experiences inner joy.
> With such joy his eyes become moist,
> And the hairs of his body stand on end.
>
> He has the seed of the mind of complete enlightenment.
> He is a vessel for teachings about reality.
> He should therefore be shown the ultimate truth,
> And he will thus obtain its consequent benefits. [VI: 5–6]

Thus three signs are prescribed. When these signs are present, not only does he lack the previous two faults but he also obtains the *qualities* of a listener: While listening to the view of emptiness, he rejoices as if he has found treasure and considers measures to prevent losing the view in future lives: "If I fall into the lower realms due to violation of the ethical precepts, the view will be discontinued." Thinking this way, he takes proper vows and observes them perfectly. "Born in higher realms due to holding precepts, if I become poor, searching for food, clothes, and so forth will distract me from listening to discourses about emptiness regularly." Thinking this way, he practices generosity. "By conjoining the view of emptiness with great compassion enlightenment is achieved, but not without it." Thinking this way, he practices compassion **[13]**. "Due to anger a person falls into lower realms and even if he is born in higher realms it would not please the exalted beings, as he would have an unpleasant body." Thinking this way, he practices patience. On seeing that he can attain buddhahood along with its incessant unimaginable results by dedicating all the merits that he obtained by engaging in ethical and other such practices, he magnificently dedicates them to attaining enlightenment for all sentient beings. Realizing the predominance of bodhisattvas in teaching dependent origination, he develops obeisance to them. *Madhyamakāvatāra* says:

> Having taken the vows properly he will abide by them constantly.
> He will practice giving, cultivate compassion,
> Practice patience and will dedicate the merit to enlightenment
> For the liberation of sentient beings.
> He also shows reverence to the accomplished bodhisattvas. [VI: 7–8a]

A precise understanding of emptiness would lead to the approach just explained. But if one's understanding leads one to think that this reasoning refutes the system of cause and effect, then until the miscomprehension is

dispelled there is no chance of developing a nonerroneous conviction in the reality of dependent origination—despite the fact that authoritativeness in that regard is claimed. Therefore, in such a situation, not only does one lack the qualities of a listener, but one also suffers the adverse consequences. Hence, one should pray that he might listen to, contemplate the meaning of, meditate on, and aspire to realize in every cycle of rebirth the profound system, without undermining conviction in the truth of dependent origination and of cause and effect.

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Homage Verses

Outline of Homage Verses

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       - 2.2.1.2 Showing how the treatise supports that refutation

[13:17] We now begin the second section of the text, the principal explanation. This section has three parts: the meaning of the title of the text; the content of

the text; and the afterword. This chapter comprises the first of those sections and the beginning of the second. The second section also comprises the remaining twenty-seven chapters.

1. Meaning of the Title of the Text: *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā-prajñā*

"Prajñā" in Sanskrit means *wisdom*. "Madhyamaka" means *middle*; "mūla" means *fundamental*; "kārikā" means *verse;* and "nama" means *so-called*. **[14]** Here "prajñā" represents *Prajñāpāramitā* by mentioning a part of it. As it is said in the commentary to *Prajñāpradīpa* [*dBu ma* za 339a], since it enables one to accomplish the view of transcendental wisdom *Prajñāparimitā* is so-called. It is named after its content. Just as ordinarily "middle" means *free from extremes*, since it avoids both extremes of existence, nonexistence, etc., he calls it "the middle." The word "madhyamaka" itself means *the meaning of "madhyama."* This is a *taddhita* construction in which 'ka' denotes *the meaning of*. The suffix 'ka' is attached because it both demonstrates and denotes the middle path. In virtue of the grammatical category of this word, both the treatise on the middle and whatever is associated with it is called "madhyamaka." Or, as Bhavaviveka says, because it is referred to by the word *madhyama* with the suffix 'ka' it is madhyamaka philosophy [*bDu ma* dza 329a]. Because of the stem of the word "madhyamaka," both the treatise and the philosophy are called "madhyamaka."

Suppose someone asks, "If that is the middle which avoids the two extremes then how can this statement in the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* be interpreted?"

> Both existence and nonexistence are extremes;
> Purity and impurity as well are extremes.
> Therefore, avoiding both sets of extremes,
> The wise should not abide even in the middle. [*mDo sde* da 27a]

This explains that one should not abide in the middle as propounded by the reificationists, who avoid partial extremes and who hold the middle, free from these extremes, to be truly existent; but *not* that there is no middle that abandons all extremes, such as existence and nonexistence. As *Vyākhyāyukti* says,

> "Extreme" connotes exhaustion and the end;
> The near, positions and condemnation. [*Sems tsam* zhi 34b]

Thus, "extreme" connotes many meanings. However, regarding the meaning of "extreme" in the context of the avoidance of extremes, it is as the *Madhyamakāloka* says:

> If in the middle way, the mind existed at all ultimately as an entity with its own nature, **[15]** then since that would have that nature, how could fixations on permanence and impermanence be extremes? How could the correct attitude that corresponds to the way things really are be a pitfall? So this makes no sense. [*dBu ma* sa 158a]

Here the object that exists as it is grasped is not the extreme and the mind is not grasping an extreme since it has the correct attitude. Therefore, "extreme" in this context indicates a pitfall just as cliff is ordinarily called "extreme" and falling off of it is called falling into an extreme. To be really existent is not possible even conventionally; therefore since the absence of real existence is the case conventionally, to hold that everything is not ultimately existent is not to grasp the extreme of nihilism; and to repudiate it, saying "things do not exist in that way," is not to repudiate a nihilistic extreme. But grasping the *nonexistence* of the refuted object of negation as existent in reality is to fall into the extreme of nihilism; and repudiation of *this* position is the repudiation of the nihilistic extreme.

The conventional existence of phenomena such as action and result and so forth cannot be undermined by any authoritative cognition. Therefore, the assertion of the nonexistence of these objects and the subject that grasps them as nonexistent are, respectively, the extreme of nihilism and the mind grasping nihilism. But saying that the Buddha is faultless is not the extreme of nihilism; and the mind grasping *that* is not nihilistic. Rejection of the existence of action and result is the nihilistic extreme of deprecation, and grasping the nonexistence of the refuted object of negation as existent in reality is the nihilistic extreme of fabrication. Therefore, leaving aside the previously mentioned repudiation, the object, and the subject—the mind that grasps phenomena as ultimately existent or existing through their own essence—are, respectively, the extreme of reification and the mind grasping it. But accepting the existence of the Buddha's wisdom and compassion is not the extreme of reification and to grasp that is not to reify.

[16] In some contexts in this text, it says that to say that everything exists ultimately is to rely on the extreme of reification. Thus one should understand that the way one falls into the extremes of nihilism and reification through a grasping in which the grasper is harmed is as it has been explained; but not by holding the mere literal meanings of "existence" and "nonexistence" to be the extremes of reification and nihilism respectively, the abandonment of which would be to rely on the so-called "theory of 'neither existence nor nonexistence.'"[1] And because of this, this careful editing of the

1. Here Tsong khapa may be referring to the view of the Jo snang pa school, adopted as well by later Tibetan scholars such as Gorampa, according to which no phenomena either exist or fail to exist in any sense.

translations of "there is no form," "there is no sound," etc, is just wasted effort![2]

The treatise is named "Fundamental" since it is, like the body, the complete, not just the partial, basis of all other treatises. "Verses" means that the entire text is a metric composition, but does not mean "chapter," as it would generally be read.[3] This treatise has 449 verses and has 27 chapters.

2. The Content of the Text

This section has three parts: praising the Buddha for teaching dependent origination free from the extremes, how to interpret dependent origination as free from the eight extremes, and prostrating in remembrance of his great kindness in teaching that.

2.1 Praising the Buddha for teaching dependent origination free from extremes

This section has two parts: the general meaning and the supporting point.

2.1.1 General meaning

This section has three parts: How this statement contains the content, purpose, and ultimate purpose, of the treatise and their relation to each other; how the basis possesses the eight attributes; and rebutting the others' refutations.

2.1.1.1 How this statement contains the content, purpose, and ultimate purpose of the treatise and their relation to each other

> I prostrate to the perfect Buddha,
> The best of all teachers, who taught that
> That which is dependent origination is
> Without cessation, without arising;

2. While it is clear that Tsong khapa has some particular text in mind in which this "careful editing" occurs, it is not clear what text this is, or what the editing in question comes to.

3. The Tibetan word for the Sanskrit "kārikā" is "tsig le'ur byas pa," which can mean *chapter* as well. Hence, the commentator clarifies that here it does not mean chapter but just verse.

Without annihilation, without permanence;
Without coming; without going;
Without distinction, without identity
And peaceful—free from fabrication.

The master, having expressed the greatness of the teacher for teaching, without distortion, the entire content of the treatise to be explained, intends to venerate him for teaching the content inseparable from the essence of dependent origination and says "I prostrate to" etc., so as to be able to compose the treatise. Here, dependent origination characterized by the eight attributes "unceasing," etc., is the content of *The Fundamental Wisdom.* **[17]** The liberation characterized by peace and freedom from all fabrication is the ultimate purpose. In *Prasannapadā* it is said that the homage verses reveal the content and the ultimate purpose of the treatise. [02b] This is because this statement presents dependent origination as possessing eight attributes and liberation as free from fabrication. However, he is not of the view that this verse shows that this is the content and ultimate purpose of the treatise because saying "Whatever . . . free from fabrication" is meant to state simply that the teacher taught this. The purpose of the treatise is to eliminate doubts, misunderstandings, and cognitive errors, mistaking the respective meanings of definitive and interpretable teachings, and to enable the reader to comprehend them properly. The content of the text is presented for this purpose. The dependency of the purpose on the treatise and the dependency of the ultimate purpose on the purpose of the treatise is the relation that is not explicitly discussed, though it is implied.

The *Commentary,*[4] commenting on "peaceful—free from fabrication" says:

> When one perceives the way dependent origination really is, there is no engagement of mind or mental processes. [04b]

Engagement in this context, according to *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya,* is *wandering* as it is said that the wandering of mind and its mental episodes is stopped. [255a] *Prasannapadā* says in this regard:

> Since conceptual thought is the wandering of mind, the way things really are, being free from that, is not conceptualized. Sūtra says, "What is the ultimate truth? Where there is no wandering of mind there is no need to talk about words." [*Bodhisattvapitaka-sūtra,* [*dKon brtsegs* ga 167a] [120a]

4. In this text, Tsong khapa uses the phrase "the Commentary" always to refer to *Prasannapadā.*

As he quotes this sūtra he does not mean that there is no insight, but instead demonstrates that the wandering of conceptual thought stops. The meaning of the statement that the conventional designation of subject and object stops is that the designation of these two stops from the perspective of meditative equipoise, but it does not mean that the insight in meditative equipoise and the ultimate truth are rejected as subject and object. This is because their being subject and object is not posited from the perspective of analytic insight, but from the perspective of conventional understanding.

[18] When these two perspectives are distinguished, many such similar doubts will be eliminated. Suppose someone asked, "In the system of those who assert that both the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas[5] realize both of the selflessnesses, the content, purposes of the treatise, and their relations to each other as expounded in the *Prasannapadā* would be applicable to both greater and lesser vehicles. So, is the audience of this text general, including those belonging to both vehicles?" *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says that the selflessness of phenomena is presented briefly in the teachings of the lesser vehicle, but it is presented extensively in the teachings of greater vehicle [*dBu ma* 'a 228a]. Therefore, to prove that the teachings of the greater vehicle are not redundant he quotes from *Lokātītastava*:

> You have said that there is no liberation
> So long as the absence of representation is not realized.
> Therefore, you have presented it
> In entirety in the greater vehicle. [*bsTod tshogs* ka 69b]

Accordingly, in this treatise no special feature of the teachings of the greater vehicle is mentioned besides the view. However, since it extensively explicates the selflessness of phenomena there is a difference in the intended audience. The *Prasannapadā* also mentions the total absence of sufferings like birth and death as the meaning of "peaceful" [04b].

2.1.1.2 How the basis possesses the eight attributes

Here in this context, the *Commentary* says, dependent origination, referred to as the basis, is the dependent origination of compounded phenomena. "Contact," "dependence," and "reliance" are said to be synonymous [02b]. The etymological meaning of "dependent" is applicable to every phenomenon. "Origination" has two meanings: "Generation" is not applicable to other than

5. Pratyekabuddhas are "independent realizers," those who achieve nirvana on their own, through their own efforts. Śrāvakas, are transmitters—those who hear the teachings and also cause other to hear them.

compounded phenomena; however, "coming into existence dependently" is also presented as a meaning of "origination" in passages such as:

> Agent depends upon action;
> Action depends on the agent as well.
> Apart from dependent arising
> One cannot see any cause for their existence. [VIII: 12]

Although this says that the agent exists depending on action, action is not the producer of the agent. **[19]** While it is said that this reasoning is applied to other phenomena—knower and known and thesis and proof are said to be interdependently arisen—these cannot each be the producer of the other. The *Ratnāvalī* says:

> When there is this that arises,
> Just as when there is short, there is long. [I: 48ab]

Though it says that, the short is not producer of the long. Whatever is arisen depending on its causes and conditions must be a thing, except for cessation. Though the dependently arisen phenomena other than these arise depending on others, the things on which they depend are not their causes and conditions. Only then can this passage be properly cited:

> There does not exist anything
> That is not dependently arisen.
> Therefore there does not exist anything
> That is not empty. [XXIV: 19]

Since the eight—cessation, etc.,—exist conventionally, they cannot be refuted without supplying a modifying phrase. In this context, *Prasannapadā* says that the modifying phrase is *in accordance with the exalted wisdom in terms of which such things as cessation do not exist* [13a]. In a later context, the *Commentary* says:

> It is not in accordance with the nature of the object of uncontaminated wisdom free from the mists of ignorance. [88b]

Thus he refers to the wisdom free from the contamination of illusions of dualistic appearance. Therefore, one should consider dependent origination, which has cessation, etc., as the basis, and, having done so, one should consider the modifying attributes applied to it to be the eight qualities—the nonexistence of cessation, etc.—in accordance with the nature of the object of the uncontaminated wisdom of meditative equipoise.

2.1.1.3 Rebutting others' refutations

This section has two parts: rebutting the argument against the thesis that cessation, etc., do not exist essentially, and refuting the argument regarding the number of attributes and the order in which they are presented.

2.1.1.3.1 Rebutting the argument against the thesis that cessation, etc., do not exist essentially

Suppose someone argued as follows: If such a modifying phrase is applied, that which exists in accordance with the nature of the object of the uncontaminated wisdom of meditative equipoise would ultimately exist. This would be inconsistent with the fact that the ultimate truth exists from that perspective. **[20]** Besides that, from the perspective of that wisdom, since there is an unperishable reality, there is permanence. There is also identity and difference and the annihilation of afflictive mental states. Therefore, it is inappropriate to say that their nonexistence from the perspective of that wisdom is the characteristic of dependent origination.

This objection arises due to a failure to understand the meaning of nonexistence in accordance with the nature of the object of the wisdom of meditative equipoise; therefore that needs an explanation. In *Prasannapadā* it is said that

> The presentation of such things as the arising associated with dependent origination is not in accordance with the nature of the object of the uncontaminated wisdom of those who are free from the mists of ignorance. Then in what way does it exist? It exists in virtue of being the object of the consciousness of those whose wisdom eye is clouded by the mist of ignorance. With regard to the perception of the way things really are, the Lord said, "This is the supreme truth since it is the non-deceptive fact—nirvana." [13a]

As he has said here, if there could be no uncontaminated wisdom of meditative equipoise, then we could not distinguish between what is explained in accordance with the vision of that wisdom and what is not so explained. On the other hand, if such wisdom is possible, then one with that wisdom does not apprehend any object *other* than the way things really are, and since an uncontaminated wisdom without an object is not possible, it *must* perceive the way things really are. Given that, how could it make sense to say that to exist from the perspective of that wisdom or to exist as the nature of that object is to exist ultimately?

Then, in the context of refuting the claim that such things as cessation exist in dependent origination as it really exists, why is it demonstrated that such things as cessation do not exist in accordance with the nature of the object of the uncontaminated wisdom? On examining whether or not the basis in which such things as cessation are instantiated—dependent origination—exists *as* cessation, etc., one examines whether or not the essence or nature of the basis is to exist as cessation, etc. It is denied that this is the case. This is the meaning of denying that such things as cessation are instantiated in dependent origination as it really exists.

[21] If such things as the cessation associated with dependent origination was its nature, then such things as cessation would exist as the nature of the object of uncontaminated wisdom. What we have been calling "the nature of the object of uncontaminated wisdom" just is *the nature of dependent origination*. So, this means that *none* of such things as cessation exists as the *nature* of the basis—dependent origination.

Thus, the very nonexistence of dependent origination as having such things as cessation as its nature is the nature of dependent origination; that itself is the nature of the object of the uncontaminated wisdom of meditative equipoise. In the same way, when we examine whether or not the nature of dependent origination is its *own* nature, since this can be refuted by an analytic mind, we find that it does not exist as a nature. Although the ultimate nonexistence of the arising of the sprout is the very nature of the sprout, the ultimate nonexistence of arising is not the very nature of the ultimate nonexistence of arising, because it is contradictory for anything to be its own nature. And so, since it has been proven that the ultimate nonexistence of the arising of the sprout is the ultimate nature and the mode of existence of the sprout, how can the examination of whether such an essence ultimately exists by nature be an examination of whether or not the sprout ultimately exists by nature? However, this is an examination of whether the mode of existence of the sprout is to have the nature of its non-arising or whether it is just posited through the force of convention. In such an examination, whether the analytic mind finds its nature to exist or not as the nature of non-arising should be understood as similar to the analysis of the sprout in every context. In the context of the emptiness of emptiness, the emptiness of essence, and ultimate emptiness, taking the way things really are as an instance of a basis of emptiness in order to show that ultimately it is empty of essence is necessary **[22]** for refuting the claim that the existence of reality and its ultimate nonexistence are contradictory.

Therefore, some say, "It is not tenable that the ultimate, reality, the way that things really are, and their nature do not exist. But, given that they exist and that they do not exist in themselves, in what other thing do they exist?" This is a question posed by those who do not understand the mode of analysis investigating the difference between ultimate existence and nonexistence. Such

fools make many false assertions to the effect that ultimate reality is not an object of knowledge, and some others assert that it truly exists.

One might argue, "If the existence of such things as cessation in dependent origination is not its mode of existence, these statements in sūtra—saying that the eight including arising exist—do not make sense:

> Through being conditioned by ignorance, action arises and through the cessation of ignorance action ceases. [*Śālistambha-sūtra, mDo sde* tsa 116a]

> Actions are impermanent;
> They are instances of arising and destruction.
> Having come in to being, they inevitably cease.
> Pacification of these is Bliss. [*Udānavarga, mDo sde* za 209a also found in *Anityatā-sūtra, mDo sde* sa 157a]

> *This shows that there is annihilation, the pacification of the aggregates.*

> Whether or not the thatāgatas arise, the nature of things is the same. [*Śālistambha-sūtra, mDo sde* kha 241a, *mDo sde* za 117a][6]

> *This shows that there is permanence.*

> The four foods are the single thing that sustains sentient beings. [*Saṁyuttanikāya, v. 2 Nidānavagga āhāra-sutta* 403]

> *This shows that there is identity.*

> Two things govern the world: shame and conscience. [*Ārya-Tathāgatācintyaguhyanirdeśa-sūtra mDo sde dKon brtsegs* ka 182a]

> *This shows that there is difference.*

> From a previous life beings come here; from here they go on to the next." [*Ārya-mahākaruṅāpuṇḍarīka-sūtra, mDo sde* cha 62a]

Prasannapadā replies to this by saying that these illustrations are presented according to two different perspectives, as per the previous quotation. [13a] Such disputes arise from thinking as follows: The school that denies that dependent origination has such things as arising and cessation as its mode of existence posits the conventional existence of arising and cessation, and so asserts that engaging with and detaching from cyclic existence exist conventionally. So, the mādhyamikas say that they do not contradict sūtra. However, if there were no place for conventional phenomena, the existence of which is established by authoritative cognition, **[23]** those phenomena would be like the

6. There are two versions of this sūtra in the canon, with slight variations in wording.

snake—that is, the rope grasped as a snake—of which no cause or effect is possible. Consequently, since the mādhyamikas cannot establish that phenomena exist conventionally, they cannot rebut the charge of nihilism. If they had a nonerroneous system in which conventional phenomena were established by authoritative cognition, they would thereby accept ultimately existent phenomena; the mādhyamikas just refuse to use those terms.

The twenty-fourth chapter responds to this criticism. One should be able to show cogently how this entire ontology makes sense in terms of this system, but not in terms of others. Otherwise, if one were forced to maintain that there is no place for bondage, liberation, etc. in the meaning of "conventional existence," and that these must be placed only in the erroneous perspective, that would be a great philosophical error. Hence, having agreed to maintain the existence of conventional phenomena in this way, to debate whether other phenomena truly exist or not is neither in accordance with the Madhyamaka tradition nor with that of the reificationists.

Even worse, as long as convention is conceived in that manner, since there would be no place for an object of authoritative cognition, neither the proposition maintained nor the person who maintains it nor the proof—including scriptural sources and reasoning—could be established by authoritative cognition. So it would be ridiculous to maintain that there are genuine phenomena established by authoritative cognition. If one can consistently maintain—having denied that they are ultimately existent—that those phenomena are yet conventionally established by authoritative cognition, then, although ultimate phenomena like reality and Dharmakaya do not exist ultimately, one can maintain that they genuinely exist. Therefore, it is meaningless to state that if they do not exist truly, the realization of the way things really are and the Dharmakaya to be attained are not possible.

And so, the Buddhist schools of the Noble Land of India who maintain the true existence of phenomena argue strenuously for the true existence of things; **[24]** while when one no longer maintains that things truly exist, one does not argue about whether anything else truly exists. This is the great quality that distinguishes these thinkers from the babbling sophists who do not even know how to reason. Thus, for the sensible thinker, there is a higher probability of mistakenly maintaining the true existence of things that are harmful or beneficial in daily life, and there is a lower probability of mistakenly maintaining the true existence of uncompounded phenomena, which are not capable of producing effects. This text emphatically denies the true existence of things when it says:

> If no produced things exist,
> How could the unproduced exist? [VII: 33]

In the sūtras' assertions of both the existence and nonexistence of such things as arising and cessation are found. Therefore, in order to dispel doubts

with regard to what is definitive and what requires interpretation, and to avoid the misconception of taking the interpretable meaning to be definitive, this treatise is written, distinguishing interpretable from definitive meanings. These two concepts have been explained in great detail in *The Essence of Eloquence: The Two Charioteers' Distinction Between Interpretable and Definitive Meanings*. So I refer the reader to that text.[7]

2.1.1.3.2 Refuting the argument regarding the number of attributes and the order in which they are presented

Suppose someone argued as follows: If the demonstration negating the eight attributes, for instance cessation, applies to all objects of refutation, then the list is too brief. But if it is a mere instance, then the two lines of the homage "Without cessation, without arising/ Without annihilation, without permanence" would be sufficient, and so the remainder of the homage would be otiose.

It is neither. Why is that? Although there are endless attributes of dependent origination, the eight are presented because these are the primary bones of contention, since reificationists argue that things have essence principally on the ground of these attributes. The bone of contention is whether or not the essence of such things as cessation exist, and can be understood through the context in which this debate occurs, and also from the *Buddhapālitī's* explanation [160a; see also *Prasannapadā* 4b]. **[25]** Those who maintain that Parahita says that the debate is a disagreement regarding the meaning of "arising" and "cessation," miss the context.

With respect to the development and degeneration of things, arising and cessation are demonstrated; with respect to time, permanence and impermanence; with respect to destination, coming and going; with respect to relata, identity and difference are demonstrated.

Suppose someone were to object that when there is arising there is cessation, and that without the former the latter does not occur; and so it would make more sense to say "without arising and without ceasing." There is order: Chöejin's birth is at the beginning, and his death is at the end of his life. However, the order is reversed in order to demonstrate that if they existed in virtue of their own characteristics, the order would be irrelevant. For if they existed in virtue of their own characteristics, they would have to be either

7. See Thurman, *Tsong khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence* for an English translation, or the ven Geshe Yeshe Thab Khas, ed., 2000, Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies Press for a critical Tibetan edition. Hopkins' *Mind Only 2002* includes a translation and detailed study of the portion of the text dealing with the Yogācāra school.

identical or different. And if the birth in the beginning and the death at the end were essentially different, Chöejin would not die after he is born, or would not be born before he was dead. If they were essentially identical, the very person who was born would die, and if that were the case, then that very person who dies would be born. Therefore, the fallacy would arise that when a god dies, that very one would necessarily be born as a god.[8]

2.1.2 Supporting point

"Prostrate" means *venerate*. To whom? To the completely enlightened one who elucidated dependent origination. How is it elucidated? It is explained that since dependent origination is not essentially arisen, it is shown, in accordance with the nature of the object of the uncontaminated wisdom of meditative equipoise, to lack the following: cessation (ceasing every moment), arising (becoming the thing that it is), nihilation (extinction of the previous continuum), permanence (persistence through time), coming nearer from a distant place, going afar from nearby, distinction (difference between objects), and identity (lack of difference between objects).

Since from the perspective[9] of the exalted ones who see the way dependent orgination really exists in accordance with reality, all of the fabrications of the expressed and the expression, definition and definiendum, etc., **[26]** cease, the reality of dependent origination is called "free from fabrication." In such a state, free from the engagement of either mind or mental processes, absent the movement of conceptual thought, having recused oneself from the conventions of knower and known, etc., one is free from the torments of birth, aging, sickness, death, etc., and so it is peaceful.

Because he understands the reality of dependent origination, the Victor alone is regarded by Nāgārjuna as speaking the nonerroneous truth. Regarding all others as chattering children, Nāgārjuna once again, with deep reverence, addresses the Buddha as "the supreme teacher," distinguishing him from all others. Who did this? The master Nāgārjuna! When? At the beginning of the treatise! The purpose is to demonstrate his authenticity and to cultivate others' reverence for the Buddha.

There are many ways to praise the Buddha. However, the reason why he is profusely praised in this text and in others for teaching dependent origination is, as explained in the homage verse of *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, that this great person

8. This absurd consequence—that the distinction between the status of sequential rebirths cannot be maintained—is discussed at length in the commentary to chapter XXVII.

9. Reading *ngo na* for *don*.

was attracted to the Buddha by his mode of negating arising and cessation, etc., just in virtue of the fact that they are dependently originated. This is the principal mode of argument he presents.

2.2 How to interpret dependent origination free from the eight extremes

This section has two parts: ordering the chapters of the text in accordance with practice, and explaining the meaning of each chapter. The first is presented in this chapter.

2.2.1 Ordering the chapters of the text in accordance with practice

This section has two parts: identifying the cognitive state by means of which one grasps the object of refutation of the reasoning, and showing how the treatise supports that refutation.

2.2.1.1 Identifying the cognitive state by means of which one grasps the object of refutation of the reasoning

This section has two parts: the main point, and the mode of applying modifying phrases to the object of refutation.

2.2.1.1.1 The main point

In the twenty-sixth chapter, two approaches to life are distinguished: engaging in cyclic existence through ignorance, **[27]** and freeing oneself from cyclic existence through the elimination of ignorance. It says:

> The cessation of ignorance occurs through
> Exercising wisdom in meditating on this. [XXVI: 11cd]

So, through meditating on the facts regarding the way things really are, ignorance is dispelled. Therefore, nirvana and cyclic existence, respectively, exist in virtue of seeing or not seeing the way things really are. So, if this ignorance is not identified, the method for eliminating it cannot be known. This would be like shooting an arrow without seeing the target. Therefore this ignorance should be identified. It is not just *not* seeing the way things really

are, nor just any old thing. Instead it is the diametrical opposite of that, maintaining the antithetical mode of apprehension. Therefore it grasps its object as really existent, as it is said in *Śūnyatāsaptati*,

> To posit things arisen through causes and conditions
> As real
> Is what the teacher calls "ignorance."
> The twelve limbs arise from that. [64]

And in *Ratnāvalī*,

> Likewise it is confused
> To apprehend this mirage-like world
> As either existent or nonexistent.
> If confused, one will not obtain liberation. [I: 56]

The nihilistic confusion that is an ignorance about actions and their effects is beside the point here. To grasp the world as existent is the ignorance of grasping true existence. Of these two, confused ignorance about the self of phenomena is, having objectified such phenomena as the eye, nose, etc., grasping them *qua* existing in virtue of their own characteristic. The confused ignorance about the self of the person is, having objectified the person, grasping it *qua* existing in virtue of its own characteristic. So, objectifying other personal continua and grasping them in that manner is grasping the self of the person, but is not the innate view of the transitory aggregates.

[28] Having objectified the 'I,' which is the basis of the arising of the thought "I am," grasping it *qua* existing in virtue of its own characteristic is both the innate view of the transitory aggregates with respect to grasping myself and confusion with respect to the self of the person. Having objectified *being mine*, grasping it *qua* existing in virtue of its own characteristic is both the innate view of the transitory aggregates with respect to grasping *being mine* and the ignorance that is confusion with regard to *being mine* with respect to the person. Having objectified the nose, eyes, etc.—the basis of *being mine*—to grasp them in that manner is to grasp the self of phenomena. Therefore to objectify *being mine* is not to objectify these things.

Taking the person and phenomena as the bases, the two selflessnesses are posited by negating the very same nonexistent self; therefore, although the two selves are posited on the grounds of distinct bases, there is no difference between the two posited selves. Hence the two self-graspings, despite having distinct objects, have an identical aspect. It is said in the commentary to *Catuḥśataka*:

> The self is that which is the essence or nature of things, and is their independence of others. The nonexistence of this is selflessness. On

> the basis of the distinction between the person and phenomena two selflessnesses are conceived: the selflessness of the person and the selflessness of phenomena. [*dBu ma* ya, 190b]

Buddhapālita also explains the meaning of the word "self" in the statement "All phenomena are selfless" as *essence* [198a].

There is another mode of positing the object of the thought "I am" as a self: that is to say that it is conventionally existent and is the basis of grasping the "I." Since the innate view of the transitory aggregates is engaged through the aspect of "I and *being mine,"* there is no innate view of the transitory aggregates that does not objectify the "I."

The confusion with regard to the true grasping of the person and phenomena is also said to be afflictive ignorance in the *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* [*dBu ma* 'a 254b] and in Candrakīrti's commentary to *Catuḥśataka*. [*dBu ma* ya 221b] Buddhapālita maintains the same thing. [198a] Since it has been proven many times to be the position of the Ārya Nāgārjuna and his son Āryadeva it is not elaborated here. **[29]** Hence grasping the self of phenomena, maintained by other masters[10] to be an obstacle to omniscience, is regarded as an affliction in this system.[11]

The Yogācārins and the Svātantrikas maintain the nonexistent self of the person and that of phenomena to be very different. Consequently they disagree about whether the selflessness of phenomena is necessarily realized if the selflessness of the person is realized. The grasping of the completely imaginary object of refutation does not occur to those who have not been influenced by philosophy. Therefore that grasping is not what binds all sentient beings to cyclic existence. That which binds them is the innate self-grasping that exists both in those who are influenced by philosophy and in ordinary people. It is said in *Catuḥśataka:*

> Perception through conception is bondage.
> That is what is negated here. [XVI: 23]

Since the conceptual thought that fabricates essence is what binds, its object is negated.

10. For example Asaṅga, Bhāvaviveka, and Śāntarakṣita.

11. In the Yogācāra and Svātantrika systems, grasping the self of phenomena is regarded as an obstacle to enlightenment, while the grasping of the self of the person is regarded as an affliction, that is, an obstacle to liberation. This is because the self of phemonena and the self of the person differ in their respective modes of apprehension. However, in the Prāsaṇgika system, the two selves do not differ in their mode of apprehension, but differ only with respect to their bases.

2.2.1.1.2 The mode of applying modifying phrases to the object of refutation

The conceptual thought that grasps the object of negation is not just *any* conceptual thought grasping *any* thing as existent; rather, it is that which grasps things as existing ultimately or in virtue of their own characteristics. As it is said in this text,

> The teachings of the buddhas
> Are based on two truths. [XXIV: 8ab]

Thus the text says that the distinction between the two truths—the existence of arising, cessation, etc., in the conventional and their nonexistence in the ultimate—should be understood. In *Ratnāvalī* it is said:

> So, in this illusion-like world
> Arising and ceasing might appear.
> But ultimately, arising and
> Ceasing do not exist. [II: 11]

The *mere existence* of arising, ceasing, etc., is not being denied, but their ultimate existence is the object of negation, and the cognitive state grasping things that way is known as the cognitive state grasping the object of negation. Similarly it is said:

> Since whatever arises in dependence on the pleasant, the unpleasant
> Or error does not exist through an essence,
> The afflictions
> Do not exist in reality. [XXIII:2]

So, *existing through its essence* and *existing in reality* are the modifying phrases applied when negating the existence of things. As it says in *Ratnāvalī*, **[30]**

> How can there be a true arising
> Whose seed is false? [I: 29]

So, here he applies the modifying phrase "true." In the definitive sūtras there are many places where such modifying phrases are applied. *Existence through its own entity* and *existence through its own essence* and *existence through its own characteristic* and *inherent existence,* etc., are similar. *Existing intrinsically* occurs frequently as well.

So, the svātantrika-mādhyamikas maintain that the existence of things can be negated only if one applies the modifying phrases *ultimately, really, truly,* and *as things really are*; but, they maintain, the existence of things cannot be

negated if these are not applied, and instead, modifying phrases such as *exists through its essence* or *exists by essence* are applied.

In the system of Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti, if any of the former or the latter modifying phrases are applied there is no need for a second modifying phrase; so the former and latter phrases are similar. Despite this they do not maintain that the modifying phrase *ultimately* is not applied to the object of negation. At the same time, they do not maintain that such things as arising cannot be negated without applying the modifying phrases in these two sets.

And so, in the *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya,* it says:

> Knowing the system of cause and effect as it applies to essenceless reflections, what wise man would take form and feeling, etc.—which are not separable from cause and effect—to have essence just because they are seen to be *merely* existent? So, although they are perceived to exist, they do not arise through essence. [*dBu ma* 'a 259b]

Thus Candrakīrti distinguishes between mere existence and essential existence. If these are not distinguished, if things were to exist, they would exist inherently; and if things were not to exist inherently, they would be completely nonexistent. And so one could never overcome the two extremes of fabrication and deprecation. As it says in the commentary to *Catuḥśataka:*

> According to the reificationists, as long as things exist, they exist inherently. **[31]** When things are devoid of inherent existence there is no way they can exist at all, like the horn of an ass. Thus one cannot escape this dilemma, and thus it would be difficult for their assertions to be consistent. [*dBu ma* ya, 175b]

And so, through essencelessness one is freed from all extremes of existence; only on this approach is it possible to posit essenceless causes and effects; and thereby one is freed from all extremes of nonexistence. This is the special feature of these two scholars' (Buddhapālita's and Candrakīrti's) explanation of the master's[12] intent. Therefore, distinguishing the two kinds of existence and nonexistence is very important.

Existence through its own characteristic and existence that is not merely in virtue of being nominally posited are the same. The mode of positing through the force of convention—as when it is said, "all conventionally existent phenomena are posited through the force of convention"—is as follows: Consider a conventional assertion, such as, "I accumulated this karma and I am experiencing the effect." If we search for the way in which the basis of this conventional positing exists, we find that it is neither the eyes, nose, etc., in-

12. "The master" always refers to Nāgārjuna.

dividually; nor is it them taken collectively; nor is this "I" any other thing. This is the sense in which the person does not exist inherently. Nonetheless, if we cannot say such things as "I see," this would be inconsistent with conventional authoritative cognition; so it must be the case that we can. Since objects do not exist through their own nature, they are established as existing through the force of convention.

The "merely" in "it is merely posited through the force of convention" precludes the object existing inherently, but does not preclude its existence being established through authoritative cognition. In the same way, the "merely" in "merely posited through names" precludes neither the existence of things other than names nor their existence being established by authoritative cognition; nor does it indicate that *everything* posited by names exists conventionally. But it *does* preclude anything existing inherently. So, in *Ratnāvalī* it says:

> Apart from that which is conventionally designated,
> What world could there be ultimately, **[32]**
> Either existent or non-existent? [II: 14bcd]

Thus, without being posited through the force of convention, existence is not possible. However, not *everything* posited through the force of convention exists. There is no difference between the failure to find even the slightest basis for the designations in "*Lhejin* saw form" and "*substantially existent Lhejin* saw form."

However, while the conventional nonexistence of *being seen by the former agent* would be undermined by authoritative cognition, *being seen by the latter agent* can be refuted by authoritative cognition; and therefore its conventional *existence* would be undermined by authoritative cognition. Thus with respect to their conventional existence and nonexistence, they are completely dissimilar.

The justification of this is as follows: When any substantially existent thing is sought using reasoning, although it *should* be found, since it is *not,* it is refuted. But, when we seek a *merely* existent thing through reasoning, because it should *not* be found, not finding it cannot refute it. Thus, this all depends on these distinctions: not being able to withstand analysis vs. that which is undermined by reasoning, and not being found by an analytical mind vs. that which is thereby refuted.

Suppose one thought, "When anything is analyzed, it is impossible to find that it exists. Therefore, if we do not assert that the mundane, conventionally existent object exists in that way, why would this not contradict the fact that under mundane analysis—is it arisen or non-arisen, coming or going?—one of the alternatives must be asserted?"

These two methods of analysis are completely dissimilar. This conventional analysis is *not* as follows: Not being satisfied with just the conventional

imputation of arising and going, one employs a method of analysis searching for the way in which the object of conventional imputation exists. The previous ultimate analysis *is* like that. And so, we do *not* accept any object to be found to exist through the *previous* mode of analysis. The object of the *latter* analysis is accepted, but since *its inherent existence* is not, how could these be the same?

[33] The svātantrikas assert that the former mode of analysis is not by itself an analysis of whether or not a thing exists with respect to the way things really are. So they even maintain that the object that is sought through this mode of analysis *exists*. And thus they maintain that that object exists through its own characteristic, because they think that if that were not even the case conventionally, such things as cause and effect would not be possible at all. So, according to the svātantrika system, by means of what criterion would one distinguish between something's existing and not existing ultimately? This system does not assert that such things as cause and effect are posited through the force of nominal convention. Thus, without being posited through the force of appearance to the conventional sense consciousnesses, etc.—*viz.*, to a consciousness undeluded with respect to the inherent existence of its object of appearance and adherence—the object's existence through its own mode of existence is its ultimate existence. The opposite is maintained to be conventional existence. Therefore, from that kind of analysis of existence and nonexistence onward, analysis would be that of existence and nonexistence with respect to the way things really are.

If one does not understand the difference between ordinary and philosophical analysis and within philosophical analysis, if one does not understand that analysis which examines existence and nonexistence with respect to the way things really are, then a great confusion will arise with respect to the frequent claims by both kinds of mādhyamikas that they maintain that the existence of the object of analysis is not even asserted conventionally. Drawing the distinction between conventional existence and conventional nonexistence is very difficult, so one should understand it on the basis of my detailed explanations elsewhere [*dBu ma dgongs pa rab gsal,* p. 217; *Lam rim chen mo,* pp. 624–672, translation by Cutler et al., III, pp. 177–202; *Legs bshad snying po,* p. 202 translation by Thurman, pp. 262–264].

While to grasp something as existent after being analyzed in the way explained earlier is precisely the way existence is posited philosophically, the two innate self-graspings do not operate in this manner. Nonetheless, they take things as existing inherently. Therefore, if anything existed in that way, it would be found by analysis; since it can be refuted, it makes sense that it can be refuted by analysis.

[34] The theory that cause and effect are empty of essence—having not been found through the method of analysis described earlier—can only be understood by a Prāsaṅgika. Therefore, it makes no sense at all to maintain that in the Prāsaṅgika system, the existence of cause, effect, and all such other

things are refuted through analytical reasoning just because they are not found through analysis. As it says in *Śūnyatāsaptati*,

> The Buddha has not refuted the mundane approach
> In which "this arises in dependence on that." [71ab]

And in the *Vigrahavyāvartanī*,

> Without accepting any convention
> We cannot make any assertion. [XXVIIIcd]

2.2.1.2 Showing how the treatise supports that refutation

And so, to know the facts regarding the manner in which things exist is to understand the nonexistence of the object as it is grasped through ignorance. This is developed through arguments against the existence of that object and through arguments proving its nonexistence; but it is not developed just through the practice of restraining one's mind from engaging with the two selves. As it says in *Catuḥśataka,*

> Seeing selflessness in the object,
> The seed of existence is eliminated. [XIV: 25cd]

This means that it is necessary to understand the selflessness of the object that is grasped as having a self.

Therefore, one should draw the distinction between the nonengagement of the mind with the two selves and the engagement of the mind with the two selflessnesses. In order to do this, it is first necessary to establish the nonexistence of the object of the ignorance that grasps the self of the person and *being mine*. That is demonstrated in the eighteenth chapter of the text. Then, when the essence of the person has been refuted, some think, "Since there *is* an agent who comes from the previous life to this one, and then goes to the next life, and who performs virtuous and vicious actions, this does not make sense." To refute this he presents the two chapters "Examination of Motion" and "Examination of the Agent" (2 and 8).

The chapter, "Examination of the Prior Entity" (9) is composed to show that the appropriator and that which is appropriated, like the agent and action, are without essence; and to refute the idea that without essence it would not be possible for there to be an appropriator. To establish the inherent existence of the appropriator both an argument and an example are presented. The relevant example—fire and fuel—is refuted in the tenth chapter. **[35]** The eleventh and twelfth chapters are composed in order to refute the argument that since there is cyclic existence there must be one who cycles and that since there is suffering there must be a self who suffers.

The first chapter refutes the arising of inner and outer phenomena in order to refute the existence of the object of ignorance grasping the self of phenomena. The three chapters including the "Examination of the Faculties," (3–5) refute the idea that since in sūtra it is asserted that the faculties, the aggregates, and the elements exist, their essence must exist as well. The three chapters including "Examination of Desire and the Desirous," (6–8) and those that follow it are composed to refute the claim that since those that are based on the faculties, aggregates, and elements—such things as desire—exist, and since their three characteristics—arising, enduring, and ceasing—exist, characterizing them as produced, and since *these* are caused by action and agent, *those*—the three bases on which they depend—have essences.

The argument in the eighth chapter can be applied both to the refutation of the essence of the person and to that of phenomena. The "Examination of Compounded Phenomena" (13), without distinguishing the person from phenomena demonstrates the emptiness of essence of mere things. Then, sometimes distinguishing between the person and phenomena, and sometimes not, in order to refute the existence of essence, the three chapters "Examination of Contact," "Examination of Essence," and "Examination of Bondage" (14–16) are composed. They refute the following arguments intended to prove the existence of essence: it is taught that phenomena come into contact with one another, the causes and conditions of arising—the appropriator—exists, transmigration exists from one life to the next. "Examination of Actions and their Fruits" (17) refutes the argument that cyclic existence has an essence on the grounds that it is the basis of the relation between actions and their effects.

"The Examination of Time" (19) is composed to refute the argument that entities have essences on the grounds that this is the basis of the imputation of the three temporal periods. The two chapters "Examination of Combination" and "Examination of Becoming and Destruction" (20–21) refute the argument that time has an essence because it is the supporting condition for efficacy and the cause of becoming and destruction.

[36] "Examination of the Thatāgata" (22) and "Examination of Errors" (23) refute the following argument: The argument in "Examination of Becoming and Destruction," that the continuum of cyclic existence is essentially empty makes no sense, since, the *effect* of the continuum of transmigration—the Tathāgata—and the *cause*—the afflictions—exist. Given all of this, in response to the argument that, if all phenomena are essentially empty, the four noble truths do not make sense, he says that *because* all phenomena are essentially empty, they *do* make sense; and that if they were *not* empty, they *would not* make sense. Thus he composes "Examination of the Four Noble Truths" (24). This should be applied at the end of every chapter refuting essence.

"Examination of Nirvana" (25) responds to the argument that if things are essentially empty then nirvana, in particular, does not make sense. Thereafter he explains dependent arising considered as identical to the middle path and

also dependent arising considered as that the seeing of which leads to the understanding of the reality of the four noble truths. In order to explain this he composes “Examination of the Twelve Links” (26). If one is confused about the explanation of reality in the earlier chapters, one engages with cyclic existence; if one is not confused, one departs. Since this is also the point, both of these purposes are apposite. In order to explain the fact that if one sees the reality of dependent origination, one will not rely on the erroneous views such as that of the prior extreme, he composes “Examination of Views” (27).

And so, having seen clearly how one’s own innate self-grasping apprehends, and having understood that the treatises are the means to extirpate it, through such activities as hearing, discussing, seeing, contemplating, and meditating one should become skilled in eliminating self-grasping, but one should not be interested in achieving skill in mere dialectic.

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CHAPTER I

Examination of Conditions

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of the essence of the arising of effects
    1.1.1 Refutation of the four extremes with respect to arising
      1.1.1.1 The thesis of the denial of arising
        1.1.1.1.1 The main point
        1.1.1.1.2 Related points
          1.1.1.1.2.1 Exposition of the characteristics of the two negations
          1.1.1.1.2.2 Examination of which kind of negation the conclusion is
            1.1.1.1.2.2.1 Showing that the conclusion is an external negation
            1.1.1.1.2.2.2 Rebuttal of refutations
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      1.1.1.2 The argument for the denial of arising
        1.1.1.2.1 Argument refuting arising from self
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        1.1.1.2.2 Argument refuting arising from other conditions, etc.
          1.1.1.2.2.1 Refutation of the three extremes with respect to arising
          1.1.1.2.2.2 Conclusion drawn from the refutation of the four extremes and rebuttal of charges against it

1.1.2 Rebutting the claim that he is contradicting the sūtras in rejecting arising from another
1.1.2.1 Presenting the argument that this contradicts sūtra
1.1.2.2 Rebutting the argument that it contradicts sūtra
1.2 Refutation of the essence of conditions in that which gives rise to things
1.2.1 Common refutation of the essence of conditions
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1.2.3.3 Refutation of the criterion distinguishing between having the nature of conditions and having the nature of nonconditions
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[36: 19] We now begin the second part of this section of the treatise, which involves explaining the meaning of each chapter. This section has three parts: the demonstration that dependent origination is essentially empty, the presentation of the fact that whether one remains engaged in cyclic existence or withdraws from it depends on whether one understands that, **[37]** and how, once one understands dependent origination, the erroneous views are abandoned.

We now begin the first of those three parts: the demonstration that dependent origination is essentially empty by nature. This section has two parts: the main point and the rebuttal of refutations. The first of these sections has two parts: the brief presentation of the two selflessnesses and its extensive explanation. The brief presentation in turn has two parts: the refutation of the essence of phenomena through the examination of the agency and action of cause and effect and the refutation of the essence of the person through the examination of the action and agent of going and coming. This chapter constitutes the first of those two parts.

This chapter has three parts: the explanation of the contents of the first chapter of the treatise, confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

In the beginning, arising is negated with the thought that in order to explain such things as the non-ceasing presented above, it would be easier to deny the existence of such things as cessation having already denied that of arising. This section has two parts: the refutation of the essence of the arising of effects and the refutation of the essence of conditions in that which gives rise to things.

1.1 Refutation of the essence of the arising of effects

This section has two parts: the refutation of the four extremes with respect to arising and rebutting the claim that he is contradicting the sūtras in rejecting arising from another.

1.1.1 Refutation of the four extremes with respect to arising

This section has two parts: the thesis of the denial of arising and the argument for the denial of arising.

1.1.1.1 The thesis of the denial of arising

This section has two parts: the main point and related points.

1.1.1.1.1 The main point

> 1. Neither from itself nor from another
> Nor from both,
> Nor without a cause
> Does anything anywhere, ever arise.

The internal and external phenomena—represented by "anything" [gang dag, Skt *kecan*], which is a synonym of "anything" [su dag, Skt *kecit*], indicating

that these phenomena are based on something else—never arise in any spatial, temporal, or metaphysical location—represented by "anywhere" ['ga zhig na, Skt *kvacana*], which is a synonym of "any place" [gang na yang, Skt *kvacit*], indicating that these locations are the bases. This should be applied likewise to the other three assertions. The word "ever" is not meaningless, since "in any spatiotemporal location" suggests a negative answer to the following question: Is it not like this? Because of the character of some places, saffron will not grow there. Because of the character of some seasons, crops will not grow then. **[38]**

One might think that according to the mādhyamika's philosophy there is no arising, but that according the reificationist's philosophy there is arising. This idea is refuted by "in any philosophical system" [*Prasannapadā* 5a]. Therefore it does not mean that in the reificationist's system there is not arising. Here, consider the following alternative translation:

Anything whatever
That ever arises, arises
Neither from self, nor from other
Nor from both or neither.[1]

It does not make sense to say, having said this, that the version of the translation which puts the two lines "Neither from self . . ." later is better than the standard translation. This is because *Prajñāpradīpa* explains that when it says "Neither from itself" in response to the question, "What does not?" the phrase, "ever arise" is applied, and applies to the other three possibilities as well [48b]. It is clear that according to the Sanskrit both the former and latter negations are intended.[2]

Commenting on the "does not exist" at the end of the śloka,[3] *Madhyamakāvatārabhāṣya* says, " 'does not exist' pertains to self-arising as an argument for existence, but it does not pertain to 'exists,' because the meaning of exis-

1. *dngos po gang dag gang na yang/skye ba nam yang yod pa lta//*. The final two lines in the standard Tibetan translation read *dngos po gang dag gang na yang/ skye ba nam yang yod ma yin//*. This alternative translation transposes the first two and last two lines. This version is found in Byang chub brtson 'grus' *dBu ma rtsa ba shes rab kyi 'grel ba' 'thad pa'i gyan*, 24a (a copy of the text available at CIHTS, Sarnath). There is no indication that this version of the text is original with him, and it is not clear where it first appears. Byang chub brtson 'grus was a student of Ngog blo ldan shes rab, and so this could be Ngog's translation.

2. This sounds like this suggestion regarding an alternative rendering came from a scholar who knew Sanskrit, probably one of the great Tibetan translators, who, since there is no negation in the last two lines in the Sanskrit, suggests a similar rendering in Tibetan without a negation at the end. However, since in the Tibetan translation each negation is treated grammatically as a separate sentence (though we have not followed that pattern in the English, staying closer to the Sanskrit for clarity) a final negation is necessary in the Tibetan.

3. The phrase "does not exist" does not, of course, occur in our translation of this verse. Instead, we translate the negation as "neither . . . nor." This negation is represented by *yod ma yin* in Tibetan and occurs at the end of the verse. The English syntax is in fact much closer to the Sanskrit than is the Tibetan.

tence is thereby implied"[4] [*dBu ma* 'a 246b]. According to this reading, one should not accept the explanation that the last two lines present the conclusion and the first two provide the premises. The other three alternatives should be treated similarly.

If arising existed through its essence, then one should accept any of the four alternative arisings as a proof of its existence. Therefore it is called an "argument for existence." The refutation of the four alternatives with respect to arising entails the refutation of the essential existence of arising.[5] Applying it in that way, the last phrase of this verse means that there is no error in not proving the nonexistence through its essence of arising. Therefore contrary to the assertion in *Madhyamakāloka* [*dBu ma* sa 210b] it is inappropriate to take the negations of the four alternatives as premises and thereby establish non-arising through its own essence. The text is not intended to be broken up in the way proposed above.

The phrase "not from self" has an essential emphatic meaning and so is emphasized, and the emphasis should be applied to the phrase in the words "just not arising from self." Then, if it is read "just not arising from self" the question might arise, "Would this be an assertion that there *is* arising from another?" **[39]** There is no error here because the word "just" expresses an external negation,[6] only negating the arising from self. Arising from another is also negated by saying "not from another." The other three assertions are similar. The point is that since all four assertions are external negations, this particular way of expressing the negation, emphasizing the negative word, eliminates the object of negation, and does not suggest any other object.

It is absolutely certain that arising either has as cause or does not. If there is a cause, is also absolutely certain that there are three alternatives: the cause and the effect have to have either the same essence or different essences or both. Therefore, four alternative theses negating arising through essence are sufficient.

4. In the last line of the Tibetan text *yod ma yin* might give the impression that the *ma yin* (does not exist) is predicated of the *yod* (exists), but Tsong khapa is making it clear that this is a compound predicate.

5. As will become clear below, this comment is aimed at Bhāvaviveka, who argues that the mādhyamika must positively prove the non-existence through its own essence of self-arising, and not simply negatively prove that self-arising does not exist through its own essence.

6. We are translating *med dgag* as "external negation" and *ma yin dgag* as "internal negation" in the sense familiar to Western philosophers of language, instead of using the misleading and neologistic terminology of nonaffirming and affirming negation common in Buddhist studies. The external negation takes wide scope and is external to the predication in question, as in "it is not the case that John has a brown dog." The internal negation has narrow scope and is internal to the predication in question, as in "John's dog is not brown." In the former case there is no implicature regarding the existence of the subject of the sentence—John may have no dog at all—and the sentence is felicitous; in the latter case there is such an implicature—the sentence suggests that John has a dog, but that it is not brown.

1.1.1.1.2 Related points

This section has two parts: exposition of the characteristics of the two negations and the examination of which kind of negation the conclusion is.

1.1.1.1.2.1 Exposition of the characteristics of the two negations

Bhāvaviveka asserts that "Neither from itself" and the remainder of the four alternatives are external negations [48b]. Candrakīrti also maintains that "neither from itself" is an external negation and the other three assertions are as well [5a]. Generally, since negation is that which is apprehended through *explicitly* eliminating the object of negation, the *mere* elimination of the object of negation—for instance, the elimination of what is other than self with respect to entities—is *not* negation. "Reality" and "ultimate truth" and such terms do not *explicitly* eliminate the object of negation. But when their meaning is present to mind it is present *qua* elimination of the manifestation of those objects, and thus they *are* negations.

There are two kinds of negation. External negation is as follows: having explicitly eliminated the object of negation, no other phenomenon is projected or established. For example, if one is asked, "Is it appropriate for a Brahmin to drink alcohol or not?" one replies, "It is not." This simply eliminates the drinking of alcohol. But this does not say whether he drinks something else or does not drink something else. In *Tarkajvālā* it says,

> The external negation **[40]** is just a mere elimination of the entity of a thing but does not establish anything else of that kind. For instance, if we say that a Brahmin should not drink alcohol, this merely eliminates, but does not say that he should or should not drink something else. [*dBu ma* dza 59b]

The internal negation, having eliminated the object of negation, *does* project or establish other phenomena. For example, if one wants to show that a person is a Kshatriya and says, "This is not a Brahmin," this does not merely eliminate Brahmninhood, but projects something other than that—being kshatriya—being inferior with respect to learning, etc. In *Tarkajvālā* it says,

> The internal negation, having negated one identity of a thing, *does* establish another relevant identity of the thing. For example, the negation, "This is not a Brahmin" projects something relevant to, but other than Brahminhood—being kshatriya—being inferior with respect to aescetic practice and learning, etc. [*Tarkajvālā* 59b]

There are three kinds of projection of other things: explicit, implicit, and contextual. The first is like "there is selflessness," which eliminates the object of negation and projects the other things by the same phrase. The second is like "Fat Lhejin does not eat during the daytime," which expresses its meaning implicitly. These two, respectively, project explicitly and implicitly. A combination of the two is like "Fat Lhejin does not eat during the daytime and is not thin." The third one is like saying, in a context where it is certain that a person is either royalty or Brahmin, but it is not certain which he is, that he is not a Brahmin. It is not expressed just by the words. **[41]** Since it is certain that there are only three kinds of projection of other phenomena these are the three kinds of internal negation. If there is no projection of these three kinds, it is instead an external negation. As *Avalokitavratavṛtti* says,

> Negation expressed implicitly;
> Accomplished by a single phrase; both
> Not asserted in that phrase:
> These are internal negations; anything different is something else.[7]
> [*dBu ma Wa* 63b]

Therefore, if other phenomena are implicitly projected either as the referents of words or as the objects of thought, this is not external negation.

It does not make sense to say, as some do,[8] that a negation associated with an affirmed substratum cannot be external. For instance, though "Brahmin" is affirmative, it does not follow that "The Brahmin doesn't drink alcohol" is not an external negation. Or to take another example, just because *sound* is manifest, it does not follow that *sound* qua *impermanent phenomenon* is not occult. Nor does it make sense to say, as somebody else does,[9] that when the negation is associated with a substratum, that is the projection of another thing. In this case the Brahmin is the basis upon which other phenomena might be projected or not, but is not the phenomenon projected.

1.1.1.1.2.2 Examination of which kind of negation the conclusion is

This section has two parts: showing that the conclusion is an external negation and rebuttal of refutations.

7. This verse comes from the grammarian Navidharma's Piṇḍanivartaranirdeśakārikā [*sGra mdo* se 251a]. There are several variant versions of this verse in the Tibetan literature.

8. It is not at all clear who Tsong khapa has in mind.

9. Nor is it clear who he has in mind here.

1.1.1.1.2.2.1 Showing that the conclusion is an external negation

In *Prasannapadā* it is said that any argument others accept has a conclusion [11a]: even the reductio refuting the four extremes proves non-arising. In *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* it says,

> Having stated the four conclusions, I am going to establish them through argument. [247a]

Since all four conclusions are asserted as external negations, the conclusion is an external negation in every context where he negates essence. Thus in *Prasannapadā* it says,

> All of these inferences merely have the effect of refuting the conclusions of others. [*dBu ma* 'a 11a]

This means that these arguments establish the mere elimination of the existence of essence, but do not establish anything else; it *therefore* does *not* mean that they refute the existence of essence, but *do not* establish its nonexistence. **[42]** These kinds of statements demonstrate that the scriptural sources presenting essencelessness take it as their subject, the thought that ascertains it takes as its object the mere elimination of essence, and that since they project no other phenomena, those are presented as external negations. In the *Commentary to Catuḥśataka* it says,

> Seeing sentient beings bound by the conception that fabricates essence, in order to release them, the tathāgatas and bodhisattvas, without contradicting dependent arising, teach that things merely are essenceless. And so, this treatise by the master explains, this is the meaning of the Buddha's teachings in a nutshell.[10] [*dBu ma* ya 238a]

And as *Prasannapadā* says:

> All of the words in this world are said to be
> Without nature and as nothing. [*Samādhirāja-sūtra, mDo sde* Da 24a]
>
> Since such statements are found, and since they intend to present external negations, the meaning of "entitilessness" is the same as the meaning of "essencelessness." [93b]

10. This quotation involves a slight abridgment of the original, with no loss of meaning.

This means that the "merely" in "demonstrate that things merely are essenceless" eliminates any other implication of these words besides the mere elimination of essence. [*Commentary to Catuḥśataka dBu ma 'a* 238a] How could it eliminate the very presentation of essencelessness? And similarly, "the argument merely refutes the position that essence exists" denies the establishment of any phenomenon other than the mere negation of essence. But this does not in any way deny that the proof merely negates essence. Thus these statements must be understood as presenting external negations.

Moreover, there is no way to negate by means of an analysis of diametrical opposites, asking whether something exists or not, or is one or many, etc., unless we can demonstrate with absolute certainty that these are in fact diametrical opposites by eliminating a third alternative. **[43]** If we *can* demonstrate that these are mutually exclusive and exhaustive, then the negation of neither opposite is possible without the affirmation of the other. In *Madhyamakāloka,* it says,

> Phenomena that have the characteristic of being mutually exclusive and exhaustive are such that the negation of one is not possible without the affirmation of the other. Therefore it makes no sense to conceive of something belonging to neither of a pair of mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. [*dBu ma* sa 191a]

It also says,

> The impossibility of the existence of that which is affirmed without the nonexistence of that which is eliminated is the characteristic of being mutually exclusive and exhaustive. This characteristic is applicable to everything that is mutually exclusive and exhaustive. Everything to which this characteristic applies eliminates any other alternative. This is like, for example, the difference found between sentient beings and non-sentient beings. [*dBu ma* sa 219a]

The Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika mādhyamikas do not differ with respect to the following matters: the characteristics of the two negations, that the conclusion of the proof refuting essence is an external negation, that when one of a mutually exclusive and exhaustive pair is eliminated the other should be affirmed; and that when one of them is refuted, the other should be established. When the existence of essence is eliminated by authoritative cognition, in virtue of the ascertainment of that elimination of the object of negation by authoritative cognition, it is said to be an affirmation. In *Madhyāṇtavibhaṅga* it says, "affirmation is indicative" [IV: 9, *Sems tsam* pi 43a]. And so, although "the sprout lacks essence" is the conclusion, its affirmation is not the conclusion.

To regard all affirmation as positive is to misunderstand the meaning of "affirmation." The affirmation of "this thing is not identical to that phenom-

enon" and of "this thing does not possess that property" is possible with respect to every object of knowledge, and negation is that which is ascertained through the explicit elimination of the object of negation.

Since essencelessness exists, conventional authoritative cognition cannot refute the existence of essence; but while essencelessness is not established by that conventional authoritative cognition, it is perceived through analytical cognition. **[44]** If this were not the case, the two negations would demonstrate the affirmation; thus it would follow that all phenomena do have essence. In *Vigrahavyāvartanī* it says clearly,

> If through essencelessness
> Essencelessness were denied,
> Then, by getting essencelessness backwards
> Essence would be established. [XXVI]

Suppose someone says, "Through analytical cognition, essence is merely eliminated; but essencelessness is not taken as an object, and therefore nor does the reasoning demonstrate it." He would then also have to say that the scriptural sources which merely eliminate essence and self do not present essencelessness or selflessness. But then he could not say that all of the scriptures presenting the ultimate truth are definitive, or that the Madhyamaka treatises present emptiness as dependent arising free from the extremes. Thus the true existence of the sprout and the true existence of the absence of true existence should both be negated; but true existence and *its* absence should *not* both be negated. It is the same with ultimate existence and its absence.

1.1.1.1.2.2.2 Rebuttal of refutations

This section has two parts: refuting the argument that analytic cognition can establish essencelessness as existent and refuting the argument that if a rational cognition establishes essencelessness, it would be truly existent.

1.1.1.1.2.2.2.1 Refuting the argument that analytic cognition can establish essencelessness as existent

Consider the following argument: An analytic cognition must establish the existence of the essencelessness of the sprout because *no other* authoritative epistemic source could establish it, and because analytic cognition *can* establish essencelessness. And if an analytic cognition finds that something exists, then it follows that it finds that it truly exists, because through examination it must have determined either that the thing exists or that it does not exist; either that

it is *so,* or that it is *not* so, as things really are. In this case, the argument continues, all of the arguments refuting the true object of negation would be similarly applicable to the truth, which is empty of the object of negation. Therefore the object of negation remains unrefuted. **[45]**

The response to this argument is that analytic cognition merely grasps that there is no existence through essence, but not the existence of such things as essencelessness. Thus the external negation is the only object of apprehension. If such things as the existence of essencelessness were grasped, then other phenomena would be projected as the objects of the analytic cognition and so the conclusion and the object of apprehension would be an internal negation. Therefore, the analytic consciousness does not directly establish the existence of essencelessness.

However, suppose someone thought that analytic cognition implicitly apprehends the existence of essencelessness and that that must be established by the analytic cognition. If so, the sentence "the sprout is without essence" would also implicitly present the existence of essencelessness because the cognition that follows from that sentence would implicitly apprehend its existence. Therefore, not merely eliminating the object of negation, but implicitly projecting other phenomena, it would be an internal negation, and would no longer be an external negation.

Consider another example—that of the fat man who does not eat during the day. Since he survives,[11] it follows that he eats. Since that he eats either in the day or the night is an exhaustive disjunction, due to the explicit elimination of his eating during the day, the implicit content of the sentence is that he eats during the night, and this is the implicit object of the cognition. However, the sentence "the sprout is without essence" does not have that kind of express implication, and that does not appear in the cognition. Therefore, there is no reason for that to be implicitly apprehended.

Without depending on the mediation of another authoritative cognitive process, one can, through the power of analytic thought, develop a cognition which is directly opposite in its mode of apprehension to that which fabricates the grasping of essencelessness as nonexistent. And so, the cognition so developed eliminates that fabrication. Therefore, depending on that analytic thought, the fabrication is eliminated. Nevertheless, the fabrication is not eliminated *just* by the analytic thought itself. For example, when one develops the authoritative cognition that ascertains the threefold proof **[46]** of the impermanence of sound, without the mediation of another epistemic state, just depending on that, one can develop the cognition that is directly opposite in its mode of apprehension to that which fabricates the permanence of sound. Nev-

11. *Tsho ba,* to survive. But this may be an early scribal error (it is present in Lhasa and Tashi Lhunpo) substituting for tshon po/ (fat). Since he is fat, it follows that he eats.

ertheless, it is neither the case that the impermanence of sound is implicitly established by the former authoritative cognition, nor that the fabrication through which one grasps sound as permanent is eliminated by that authoritative cognition. And so as it is said *Pramāṇavārtika*,

> Sound is produced.
> By stating that all things of this kind are impermanent,
> Implicitly they are understood to be subject to destruction. [IV: 22, *Tshad ma* ce 140a]

Although it says "implicitly," which means "by the force of," it is not *therefore* an implicit understanding.

One might respond as follows: The fact of "the existence of essencelessness" is apprehended by an authoritative cognition. So, since the existence of essencelessness is established by an analytic cognition, thereby the fact that it exists is established. But the threefold proof is not itself that fact established in the conclusion, and so the cases are not parallel.

To this we reply: The mādhyamika who accepts reflexive awareness conventionally believes that the apprehension of essencelessness by authoritative cognition is established implicitly through a reflexive awareness, which is a perception of that cognition. Nonetheless, since "reflexive awareness" is understood in an everyday sense, the existence of essencelessness is not established by analytic cognition.

In Candrakīrti's view, moreover, the fact that it exists is not established by analytic cognition. This is because through analytic cognition one discovers whether something exists or not or whether it is so or is not so through examination of the way things really are, and if analytic cognition discovers that something exists, then it would have to be truly existent. And he does not assert that this can be established implicitly by means of reflexive awareness either. So how could the existence of essencelessness be so established?

So here the nondeceptiveness, which is the characteristic of authoritative cognition, is understood in a mundane sense: The man in the street does not distinguish between nondeceptiveness and deceptiveness with respect to *initial* cognition, and in general takes the nondeceptive to be authoritative *recognition*[12] induced by nonconceptual authoritative perception. Therefore, we see that he maintains that *recognition* induced by nonconceptual authoritative perception is also authoritative. Thus, there are authoritative conceptual thoughts that are also authoritative direct perceptions, because the object of *recognition* is posited

12. We are translating *bcad shes* as "recognition," but using that English term in the technical sense used to refer to Kant's second synthesis in the *Critique of Pure Reason,* the synthesis of recognition in the imagination in which a sensory manifold is recognized as an awareness of an object. Here the point is that in such an act—a recognition—the mind engages in a subsequent apprehension in consciousness of an initial act of direct perception.

as manifest, **[47]** and these thoughts are nondeceptive with respect to the manifest object.

Since we have not examined whether or not it exists in fact or in convention, to establish essencelessness as a basis of predication is not to have established it by reasoning. Moreover, since the fabrication through which one grasps essencelessness as nonexistent can be eliminated without depending on reasoning, the *existence* of essencelessness is a manifest object. Since while its *existence can* be manifest although *essencelessness* is an occult phenomenon, for whomever that phenomenon is authoritatively established the *existence of essencelessness* is *manifest*. For instance, since momentariness is occult, even though sound and blueness are manifest, the momentariness of these two is occult. Thus, when a conventional cognitive process that ascertains existence is nondeceptive with respect to what is manifest, it is authoritative direct perception. One should thus know how the appearances of such things as sprouts appear as essenceless for one who has understood the essencelessness of such things as sprouts through rational analysis.

1.1.1.1.2.2.2.2 Refuting the argument that if a rational cognition establishes essencelessness, it would be truly existent

When the essencelessness of things such as sprouts is established by rational cognition, seeing it as though it withstands the reasoning conducting ultimate analysis, some say that the absence of true existence truly exists. Some others, distinguishing between the rational mind and authoritative inferential cognition as two different facets, say that the former does not have an object, but that the latter does have an object.

But neither of these two positions is tenable. The analytic inquiry into whether or not such things as sprouts truly exist is an analytic inquiry into whether or not they exist as they are grasped by the innate cognitive process of grasping things as truly existent explained earlier. But it is not an inquiry into whether or not they withstand the reasoning conducting ultimate analysis. Nor is it an inquiry into whether or not they are established by rational cognition. Therefore, while we accept that something exists that is merely established by rational cognition, this does not mean that we accept that it would then be a truly existent object.

Someone might argue as follows: Suppose one does not accept it as a truly existent object. But since something can be established by rational cognition **[48]** it must exist in such a way that it can withstand the reasoning conducting ultimate analysis, because if it did not withstand that analytic reasoning, this would contradict its being established by it. And if it did exist in such a way that it could withstand rational analysis, it must truly exist.

This misconception derives from taking "being able to withstand analysis by rational cognition" and "being established by rational cognition" to mean the same thing. Saying that something is established by rational cognition is taken to mean that it truly exists. Thus, this misunderstands the criterion of true existence. Therefore, its untenability can easily be understood just by the presentation of the criterion of grasping things as truly existent explained earlier.

Initially, the rational mind searches to determine whether or not such things as sprouts truly exist, and then finds the absence of their true existence. And when it searches once again to determine whether or not that absence of true existence truly exists, *that* absence of true existence is not found. However, this does not mean that the absence of true existence is not found.

When initially a search is conducted to determine whether or not such things as sprouts can withstand the reasoning conducting ultimate analysis, it is found that they cannot withstand such analysis. But when a search is again conducted to determine whether or not that inability to withstand analysis, could withstand analysis it is found that *it* cannot. Therefore, being found by analytic cognition and withstanding its analysis are not the same thing.

It is necessary, through presenting the conclusion and the object to be comprehended as external negations, to eliminate this doubt in order to understand to what degree a thing must exist in order to cross the lowest bar a thing must cross in order to count as truly existent. Until the thought that rational cognition can establish the existence of essencelessness is eliminated, it is impossible to establish the object to be comprehended as an external negation. According to *Prajñāpradīpa* [48b], if the proposition that arising is free from the four extremes is not taken to be an external negation, and instead is taken to be an internal negation, that would contradict the statement in the *Mother sūtra* that

> If one engages with form as non-arisen, one does not engage in the perfection of wisdom.[13]

And the *Sañcayagāthā* says **[49]**

> Even though the bodhisattva fabricates these aggregates as empty,
> Whoever engages with representations does not have confidence in the existence of the non-arisen. [*Sher phyin* ka 2a]

There are many similar passages, all of which say that for rational cognition to grasp selflessness and emptiness of essence, without taking them as merely eliminating the fabrication of the object of negation, and instead to take

13. Here Tsong khapa takes this half-verse from *Prjñāpradipā*. This quotation is not actually found in any extant recension of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāparamitā-sūtra*. Jamyang shepa, in fact, comments in his commentary to *Madhyamakāvatāra* that this is a mistranslation or misattribution. [*Collected works* ta, 209a]

some other phenomenon such as the existence of selflessness to be projected, is to engage with representation, grasping true existence, but not to meditate on the meaning of the perfection of wisdom.

Meaning that only when one grasps the negation of the fabricated object of negation, but does not engage with representations does one engage with the perfection of wisdom, it is said in the *Heart of Wisdom Sūtra*, "These five aggregates should also be perfectly perceived as empty of essence" [*Sher phyin* ka 145a]. And *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> Therefore seeing the self and *being mine* as empty,
> The meditator attains liberation. [VI: 165cd]

Therefore it should be understood that is said frequently in scriptures that it is necessary to see selflessness and emptiness not to be inconsistent. Otherwise it would be contradictory to say both "Whoever engages with representations does not have confidence in the existence of the non-arisen" and "If one engages with form as non-arisen, one does not engage in the perfection of wisdom."

Failure to distinguish between the two kinds of negation as ways of eliminating fabrication and the misunderstanding of some statements in sūtra that say that one should not grasp anything as empty or nonempty, as having a self or as selfless, etc., appear to be great hindrances preventing many from maintaining the view of selflessness.

Moreover, as the *Lokaparīkṣā* says,

> This is to refute existence;
> It is not to apprehend nonexistence.
> To say that something is not black
> Is not to say that it is white.[14]

Therefore, someone might think that while the object of negation is merely negated, it is not tenable that its negation is the conclusion of the argument. But *Prajñāpradīpa* quotes these lines **[50]** in support of the claim, "This is a mere negation of inherent existence; however, entitylessness is not asserted," and the subcommentary also explains that it supports the claim that this is an external negation [94a].

This can also be understood through the example just presented: It says that "This is not black" merely negates its being black, but does not say beyond that that it is white. Therefore, when one rejects the assertion that something is white, how could this be the rejection of the statement that the mere negation of its being black is not asserted? In the same way, it should be explained that to say that something is essenceless is a mere denial of the existence of essence;

14. This is a lost text attributed to Nāgārjuna by Bhāvaviveka.

beyond that it is not taken to assert the existence of essencelessness. Thus it is neither stated that that the mere negation of the existence of essence is not presented by that sentence, nor that it is not an object of the mind, nor that it is not established through argument. Nor does this assert that it is a nonentity. It is said in *Tarkajvālā* that the sentence "that earth does not ultimately have the nature of being an element"[15] merely presents earth, etc., as not ultimately having the nature of being elements; but does not present any other nature or the nature of a nonentity [*dBu ma* dza 59b]. This means that beyond the mere elimination of essence, this does not establish essencelessness as a nature as well. This is because in that text it says that through the method of negating existence, nonexistence is not established; instead it explains that this presents the path eliminating the two extremes [120b]. Similarly, *Prasannapadā* says,

> We neither assert that this is existent nor nonexistent; but we refute others' fabrications of existence and nonexistence; we maintain that through eliminating the two extremes the middle path is established. [127b]

This statement also means that when we merely eliminate others' assertions of the two extremes of existence and nonexistence we do not establish anything else apart from these. But this is not to say that we do not establish the mere negation of the two extremes, because it is said that through the elimination of the two extremes **[51]** the middle path is established.

1.1.1.2 The argument for the denial of arising

This section has two parts: the argument refuting arising from self and the argument refuting arising from another.

1.1.1.2.1 Argument refuting arising from self

This section has three parts: presenting our own position, the way others charge us with errors, and arguments that our own system does not commit those errors.

15. Here we have supplied the entire sentence so that the context will be clear. This sentence is not quoted in full in this context, though it is quoted in the corresponding discussion in *The Essence of Eloquence*. See Geshe Yeshes Thab Khas (2000), p. 318, and Thurman (1984), p. 379.

1.1.1.2.1.1 Presenting our own position

1. Neither from itself nor from another
Nor from both,
Nor without a cause
Does anything whatever, anywhere arise.

The Sāṁkhyas see things as follows: It is not tenable that internal phenomena such as the eye, or external phenomena such as sprouts, arise unless they already exist at the time of their causes. Consequently, they maintain that things exist within them in an unmanifested form, at the time when such causes as embryos and seeds exist, arise from them. They do not maintain that they arise after being manifested.

To refute this, we adduce the absurd consequence that there would be no point to arising: There would be no point in such a thing as a sprout arising again, because it would have already achieved its status. Since the purpose of arising is to achieve one's own status, when this has already been achieved there is no need for it to arise again. The Samkhya might say that it is not inconsistent for a thing to have attained its status and still need to arise. But this is refuted because it entails an infinite regress: The absurd consequence would follow that it would never be the case that such things as the sprout would not arise again, because even once it has come into existence it would have to arise again.

To this the Sāṁkhya might reply: Something that exists as an unmanifested potential entity must arise in order to be manifested, and that once it is manifested there is no need for a further arising. Therefore, neither the former nor the latter absurd consequence is entailed. However, this cannot rebut the charge, because if that which is manifested were there previously, it would not need to arise; if it arose having existed previously, the infinite regress would still ensue. If, on the other hand, they said that that which is manifested did not exist previously, then one would abandon the position that only that which exists previously in the cause arises.

Some other Sāṁkyha schools assert that there is no arising, but only manifestation. However, these arguments refute them as well. In the twentieth and the seventh chapters, other arguments are also presented to refute this position. **[52]** However, there are many other refutations in this treatise similar in kind to these two arguments provided by Buddhapālita.

1.1.1.2.1.2 The way others charge us with errors

Buddhapālita says:

> Things do not arise from themselves, because their arising would be pointless. An infinite regress of arising would follow. [161b]

In response to this Bhāvaviveka alleges that this does not make any sense, because this argument provides neither reasoning nor an example to prove the nonexistence of arising from self. Therefore it merely states the thesis.

He says that because Buddhapālita does not examine their thesis he does not dispel the errors they commit, saying that if the meaning of "from self" according to the Sāṁkhya were *from the manifested effect itself* then that would be to establish that which has already been established. If on the other hand it meant *from an unmanifested cause itself* then everything that is arisen would arise that way. And this would be inconsistent [49a].

He also says that it does not make sense because the argument is open to dispute from another opponent. The phrase that is translated in the Tibetan edition of *Prasannapadā* as "It is a statement from which an absurd consequence would follow" [5b],[16] is translated in the Tibetan edition of *Parjñāpradīpa* [49a] as "It is a statement that affords an opportunity for dispute."[17] The subcommentary comments on it that way. It explains that for this reason as well it does not make sense" [*dBu ma* wa 74a].

How is this supposed to present an opportunity for others to dispute? By reversing the argument concerning the matter at hand. The way the opportunity is presented for dispute through reversing the argument concerning the matter at hand is as follows: It appears that one could reverse the conclusion, "Things are not arisen from themselves," to yield, "Things are arisen from something other," and it appears that one could reverse the premise, yielding, "There would be a point to and an end of arising." Therefore, Bhāvaviveka says, Buddhapālita would commit the error of contradicting his own position.

[53] But "There would be no point and there would be an infinite regress" is not a premise. Nor could "If there were arising from self there would be no point to it and there would be an infinite regress" be a premise. This is because if it were established that the referent of the debate satisfies these, the conclusion would have to have been established. Thus, Bhāvaviveka says, these two reversed forms are his premises.

16. *thal bar 'gyur ba'i tshig yin pa'i phyir*; Skt *pransaṅgāvākyatvāt*

17. *glags yod pa'i tshig yin pa'i phyir*. The Sanskrit text of *Prajñāpradīpa* is lost, so we don't know if the same phrase was in both texts in the original, though it would be highly unlikely that the same term would have been translated this way in Tibetan.

If the apparent premises are reversed, the apparent conclusion should be reversed as well, *mutatis mutandis*. But, it cannot be reversed in the same way that the premises have been. Therefore, its reversed form would be "There is not *mere* elimination of self-arising." This is not the reversal of the premise of the absurd consequence, because it is said that it is the reversal of the conclusion and the nonexistence of self-arising is not said to be the premise.

Given that, since it is said that arising is finite and has a point, and since the self-arising of things is not *merely* eliminated, it follows that they arise from another. In that case, the meaning of "They do not arise from self" would contradict the view that there is a mere elimination of self-arising. The subcommentary [*dBu ma* wa 74b] says that this contradicts the philosophical view expressed in the master's text according to which neither arising from another nor pointless and infinite arising are accepted.

Suppose one said that since "pointless arising" and an "infinite regress of arising" are accepted as premises, it is not tenable to say that no reasoning has been presented. In reply to this, that was said with reference to the fact that no reasoning was provided *capable of proving that there is no self-arising*. Therefore, this is not inconsistent with their system.

1.1.1.2.1.3 Arguments that our own system does not commit those errors

Here is how Candrakīrti refutes these allegations: The absurd consequence that shows that there is a contradiction between further arising having a point and its existence can refute arising from self. If it could not, then even presenting autonomous arguments could not refute it. Therefore, there is no need to present autonomous arguments or examples. Since it makes no sense for mādhyamikas to propound autonomous arguments, there is no need to rebut charges others make regarding autonomous premises or autonomous conclusions.

However, one might argue as follows: Since the contradiction must be demonstrated using inferences accepted by the Sāṁkhya themselves, **[54]** Buddhapālita must use the examples, premises, and conclusions accepted by those others to eliminate their own errors. But since this has not been articulated and those errors have not been eliminated, the previous errors remain.

However, it is not necessary to present an argument accepted by the other for every opponent. Where it is necessary, it is presented. Buddhapālita states that "that which exists as itself does not need to arise once again" [161b], commenting on "Their arising would be pointless" [161b]. Therefore, its existence is the premise, and the pointlessness of its arising is the conclusion. This presents the premises, the property ascribed by the conclusion, and the confirming example, which are all also accepted by the other. So why is he accused

of not presenting premises and examples? The manifest pot which is not said to arise again is the example. The denial of the arising of the nonmanifest potential entity is the conclusion. Therefore, there should be no doubt that we neither beg the question nor are inconsistent. Thus, he do not commit the first two errors with which we are charged.

The reason the charge that he commits the error of accepting the "reversed propositions" does not apply is as follows: It is said that "The meaning of the reversed reductio pertains to the opponent but not to us because we do not assert a thesis" [*Prasannapadā* 7b–8a]. This does not refer to *all* of the reductios presented by the mādhyamikas, but it refers to the reductio presented above refuting arising from self.

The absurdity demonstrated by these reductio arguments is not merely that there is the absurd consequence that arising would be pointless and endless; but that *additional* arising would be pointless and endless. The reversal of the absurdity—that an additional arising has a point and an end—is only maintained by the Sāṁkhyas. Therefore, since we do not accept this, how could it be the case that we contradict our view in virtue of accepting it? This passage does not show that the reversed form of whatever absurd consequences presented by the mādhyamika is accepted by the relevant opponent, although we do not accept them; or, in general, that the mādhyamika does not make assertions.

[55] Buddhapālita uses "again" saying "arising once again is pointless," [161b] and this means that the arising of the sprout that they accept—after it has achieved its own status at the time when its cause is present—does not exist. *Prasannapadā* also uses "again" [5b]. *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> If it is imagined that one already arisen arises again . . . [VI: 9a]

So existing and arising *again* are contradictory, but existing and *arising* are not contradictory, *mutatis mutandis* for existence and arising having an end.

Candrakīrti's demonstration that the reverse of the reductio argument does not pertain to us shows that Bhāvaviveka says that Buddhapālita must accept the reverse of the reductio, without being aware of the absurd consequences actually presented—that *additional* arising would be pointless and endless—and taking the reductio to show that arising *in general* would be pointless and endless.

Suppose one argued as follows: When an absurd consequence is demonstrated that the other does not accept, the fact that would be the opposite of the target of the reductio must be accepted by the proponent of the argument. Therefore it is not tenable that he does not accept the fact that would be the opposite of the target of his own reductio. To this Candrakīrti replies,

> If someone who asserts essencelessness presents a reductio to someone who asserts that things have essence, how could it follow that

> the proponent accepts the fact that would be the reverse of the consequence? [8a]

The absurd consequence in this context is not the absurd consequence in general, but those two that refute arising from self. When these two reductios establish the unacceptable consequence, the proponent of the argument must not accept the opposite fact. This is because the presentation of the meaning through words does not commit the speaker to asserting what they mean. Instead they serve the intention of the speaker. The one who presents the reductio does so with the intention merely to refute additional arising having a point and an end.

On the other hand, one might argue as follows: Since the Sāṁkyha intend to show that the meaning of "arising" is merely the manifestation through conditions of something that already exists, when they say "the sprout arises" the meaning of "the sprout arises" is simply that. **[56]** But as *Prasannapadā* says in the sentence "If they had that capacity"[18] [8a], there would have to both be the capacity of the words to refer to the thing that already exists and the intention of the speaker to express that. Therefore the error is not committed.[19] Candrakīrti says:

> Therefore, establishing the reductio entails merely refuting the opponent's thesis; it does not establish the opposite of the absurd consequence. [*Prasannapadā* 8a]

This statement means that the previously presented reductio does not prove the absence of arising from self through the premise that additional arising has a point and an end, which is the opposite of the absurdity demonstrated by the reductio. But it is not without purpose, because by establishing the pointlessness and endlessness of arising, which the Sāṁkhya do not accept, it serves the purpose of establishing the mere rejection of arising from self, which is the thesis maintained by the Sāṁkhya.

Suppose someone maintained that the sprout has the nature of existing inherently. Consider a reductio like this: The sprout would not arise in dependence upon the seed, because it would be inherently existent. We can convert the reductio into a positive argument by contraposing it as follows: "The sprout does not exist inherently because it arises in dependence on the seed." There are many cases like this. They are all similar in that the thesis advanced by the opponent that things exist inherently is simply rejected, but nothing else is established.

18. In this sentence *nus pa yod na smra ba po'i brjod par 'dod pa'i rjes su byed pa yin no/de'i phyir thal ba sgrub pa ni pha rol po'i dam bca' la 'gog pa tsam gyi 'bras bu can yin pa'i phyir thal ba las /bzlog pa'i don du 'gyur ba yod pa ma yin no//* Candrakīrti argues that words do not bind the speaker, but reflect communicative intentions.

19. This is the error of drawing an absurd consequence which is not the opposite of what the opponent must maintain.

This presents a reversed form of the reductio, but not an *autonomous* reversed form of the reductio. There are also two kinds of reductio: those that project reversed forms and those that do not. So, although we accept both premises and conclusions in order to establish our own system, we do not accept autonomous conclusions or premises.

"So," one might ask, "what is the meaning of 'autonomous'?" In Cog ro's[20] translation of *Prajñāpradīpa*, the section concerning the refutation of an opponent's view reads as follows: "Is it said *qua* independent assertion, or *qua* refutation?" So the meaning of "autonomous" is *independent* [152a].

[57] An opponent to whom essencelessness must be proven examines the way in which something constitutes an object of authoritative cognition as follows: Something constitutes an object of authoritative cognition only if it is inherently existent, but if one has not determined whether or not an object is inherently existent it does not constitute an object of authoritative cognition. Therefore, when the authoritative cognition that perceives things to lack inherent existence establishes both instances and the structure of the argument, the conclusion is established. Having established that, he will no longer assert the existence of essence.

If it could be established by an authoritative cognition perceiving an inherently existent object, the object of negation could not be refuted. Therefore, authoritative cognition, without leading another by means of their own thesis regarding the mode of existence of things, would not be able independently to establish the structure of an argument. For these reasons, autonomy is not accepted.

On the other hand, the opponent should accept facts that have not been undermined by authoritative cognition. This has been proven through reasoning acceptable to the opponent. Therefore it is established by an inference either accepted by the opponent or by that which is accepted by others—that is, by the one who is other than the proponent. Since this is extremely difficult to understand, it should be understood through the extensive explanations in *The Essence of Eloquence* (see Geshe Yeshes Thab khas [2000] and Thurman [1984]) and other such texts.

1.1.1.2.2 Argument refuting arising from other conditions, etc.

This section has two parts: the refutation of the three extremes with respect to arising and the conclusion drawn from the refutation of the four extremes and rebuttal of charges against it.

20. Cog ro was one of the great ninth-century Tibetan translators of the Buddhist canon.

1.1.1.2.2.1 Refutation of the three extremes with respect to arising

Although there are many different arguments refuting arising from another presented in the treatise, Buddhapālita [254a] has refuted it through the argument in the twentieth chapter according to which if there were arising from another causes and non-causes would be equivalent. Candrakīrti also uses this very argument as a refutation in *Madhyamakāvatāra* [VI: 14]. In *Prasannapadā* [12a], he refers to "the essence of entities . . ." [I:3a] as a refutation of arising from another and uses the previous arguments as refutations as well. Buddhapālita says,

> Nor do things arise from others, because then anything could arise from anything. [161b]

[58] Here, the reason why the absurd consequence "if there were arising from another, anything could arise from anything" is presented is that the "other" in "arising from another" is not just something that is different in virtue of being the referent of a different noun, but something that is inherently existent as different. If it existed in that way, then the sprout's depending on the seed would be inconsistent; thus, their relation would be refuted. If it were to arise from another unrelated object, then it could arise from anything!

Therefore if the sense in which the seed were inherently different from the sprout and the sense in which it is different from charcoal were the same then it would make no difference whether or not the seed arose from either of these two. *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> Anything could arise from anything else, because
> All nonproducers would be equivalent in that they are other. [VI: 14cd]

And

> It would not make sense for any things different
> Through their own characteristics to belong to the same continuum. [VI: 61cd]

Thus things that are distinct through their own characteristics belonging to the same continuum or being cause and effect has been refuted; it has been said many times that if they existed distinctly through their own characteristics it would not make sense for them to be dependent.

Some say that it is decisive because it knocks over the first domino.[21]

21. *ldog pa gcig pa'i phung 'phul* is an idiom which lexically translated is meaningless in English, but whose meaning is nicely captured by this idiom.

Others say that whatever are cause and effect are sequential and that for difference, simultaneity is necessary, and that for *this* very reason this decisive reductio is presented. But that is not the point of this argument.

Here Bhāvaviveka thinks that the point of this argument is as follows: If the explicit conclusion and premises are not reversed and are left as they are, then "anything could arise from anything" could not function as a premise. It would follow that our own position could not be established. It does not present anything such as direct perception that would undermine the opponents' assertion that there is arising from another. Therefore, the other's position would not be refuted. The argument would be irrelevant, just like a string of unrelated statements. On the other hand, if they are reversed, then the meaning of the reversed premise would be that something could arise from something. **[59]** But the meaning of the reversal of "There is no arising from another" cannot be that there *is* arising from another, because this is in the context of the presentation of the ultimate nonexistence of arising from another [50a].

If this were so, then since the premise that something arises from something would have to show that entities have arising—not merely to eliminate arising from others—there would have to be arising from self, from both, and arising causelessly. Therefore, this account of the meaning of "There is no arising from others" would contradict the previous position according which it is a *mere* elimination of arising from others. The subcommentary [*dBu ma* wa 77b] explains that it also contradicts the two lines:

> Nor without a cause
> Does anything, anywhere, ever arise. [I: 1cd]

Even here, although this position is not being established through an independent argument, no error is committed. The opponent's assertion regarding arising from another can be refuted through the arguments explained earlier. Thus this is simply refutation through reductio. Here the argument that confirms causality can establish that there is no arising from another; therefore, although the contrapositive is projected, we do not commit the error of contradicting the Madhyamaka view. This is because this only presents the mere negation of arising from others.

Mādhyamikas who maintain that conventionally things exist through their own characteristics maintain that conventionally there is arising from another. But the two masters (Buddhapālita and Candrakīrti) do not maintain this even conventionally. They maintain that through innate grasping one also grasps such things as the self as existing through their own characteristic; but that one does not grasp cause and effect as different through their own characteristics through an innate cognitive process. *Madhyamakāvatāra* says:

> Ordinary people say, "By sowing this seed
> I caused the birth of this child," and think,

> "I have planted this tree." Therefore there is no
> Arising from other even according to ordinary people. [VI: 32]

Thus he paraphrases Buddhapālita's explanation [161a].

In everyday life, merely in virtue of having sown the semen—that is the seed of the child's body—people say, "I gave rise to this child." **[60]** And merely in virtue of having planted the seed, they say, "I have planted this tree." Therefore in everyday life, the seeds of the child and the tree, respectively, are not seen as different from themselves through their own characteristics. Otherwise, people would say that they themselves gave rise to other people and other trees.

Although the seeds sown are not the child or the tree, in virtue of having sown them one can regard oneself as having given rise to the child and having planted the tree. This is because, for instance, although the hand and the eye are not the person, when the hand is hurt or one sees material form with the eye one can assert that "I am hurt" or "I see material form." In ordinary life, there is no convention of referring to parents and children like that; therefore, the two things mentioned in the previous example are causes and effects in virtue of belonging to the same continuum. Although in ordinary innate grasping there is no grasping of arising from another, it is not established by conventional authoritative cognition that there is no arising from another.

Now for arising from both: The Sāṁkhyas assert that the sprout's arising from the seed is arising from itself; and its arising from other things, such as conditions, is arising from others. The Jains say that the arising of the earthen pot existing in the form of clay is arising from self with respect to the clay and is arising from another with respect to the potter and the wheel, etc. The arising of Chöejin who exists in the form of a being continuing from the previous life is arising from self with respect to that being and is arising from another with respect to such things as his parents and karma. This can be refuted by the arguments previously explained that refute arising from self and arising from another.

Those who propound causeless arising are Lokacakṣu,[22] who, relying on one of the Sāṁkhya's twenty-five categories of objects of knowledge, wrote one hundred thousand verses propounding the Cārvāka doctrine, and his followers. **[61]** If there were causeless arising, arising, which by its nature is spatiotemporally restricted, would be causeless. It would follow that if something could arise from any *one* thing, it would be able to arise from *anything*, and it would follow that all efforts would be pointless.

Bhāvaviveka says that there are two kinds of causeless arising, and that the case where there is a cause, but it does not function as a cause, as in the

22. Founder of the Cārvāka, or materialist, school of Indian philosophy.

case of being arisen from things like Ishvara is one them [*Prajñāpradīpa* 51a–51b]. Candrakīrti refutes this, saying that it is shown to be untenable because such arising is included among the three previous kinds of arising [12b].[23]

1.1.1.2.2.2 Conclusion drawn from the refutation of the four extremes and rebuttal of charges against it

These four refutations establish the assertion that there is no arising. According to *Prasannapadā,* since there is no arising, dependent origination is established as satisfying such predicates as "non-arisen" [12b]. Although these arguments provide refutations through reductio, they establish the nonexistence of essential arising. Establishing that shows how the eight attributes mentioned in the homage verses are satisfied: What is not arisen is not ceased; therefore, essential cessation can be refuted. As it is said in *Catuḥśataka.*

> The arisen does not come.
> Similarly the ceased does not go. [XV: 10ab]

Thus it is established that that which has come and that which is gone are essenceless. As it will be shown in chapter eighteen, by refuting cause and effect having identical or different essences, both reification and nihilism are eliminated.

Here *Prasannapadā* responds to the following argument: If entities are neither arisen from self, from other, from both, nor causelessly, the assertion in sūtra that action arises from ignorance as a condition would not be tenable. It responds by saying that it is tenable conventionally, but not ultimately [18b]. If the action were to arise *ultimately* from ignorance as a condition, these two *would* be contradictory. But since they are posited conventionally there is no contradiction. Since this is the meaning of the assertion, the arguments refuting the four extremes with respect to arising do not refute conventional arising. Therefore, conventionally, the nonexistence of the four extremes with respect to arising and the existence of arising are not contradictory. **[62]**

Next, in response to the question "What? Does this explain the ontological status of the conventional?" *Prasannapadā* says that it is asserted that the conventional exists through merely being conditioned. But it does not exist in terms of the four extreme assertions. So the demarcation between asserting

23. Bhāvaviveka here provides an alternative interpretation of "causeless arising," arguing that it should include cases of arising from things that are not properly causes, like time and deities, etc.—that these bring about arising, but not in the way that causes do. Candrakīrti replies that inasmuch as the earlier alternatives include arising from another and these factors—cause or not—are other and give rise to things, this alternative reading is erroneous.

and not asserting them is clearly set out [18b]. The reason for these two facts is that the latter assertion requires one also to assert that things must exist essentially. But to assert the former would not be to assert that things exist essentially, because in virtue of the mutual dependence of cause and effect they do not exist inherently. Thus it is explained that it makes no sense to assert that things exist inherently, and it does make sense to say that things lack essence. In order to corroborate this, Candrakīrti quotes from the *Lokātītastava*:

> The sophists maintain that suffering is self-created,
> That it is created by another, and both,
> And that it arises causelessly.
> You have taught that it is dependently arisen. [21]

And from this very text:

> The agent depends upon action;
> The action depends upon the agent as well.
> Apart from dependent arising,
> One cannot see any other cause for their existence. [MMK: VIII: 12]

And from sūtra:

> The Buddha has said just this: This is the way the reality of phenomena is explained: When this exists, this comes to be; when this has arisen, that arises. Conditioned by ignorance, actions arise; conditioned by action, there is consciousness. [*Prasannapadā* 18b][24]

The point of the first citation is that the four extreme assertions with respect to arising make *no* sense, and dependent arising *does* make sense. The point of the second citation is this: The phrase "apart from" means that coming into existence through mutual dependence is the way things exist, but there is no way of existing inherently. The point of the final citation is to corroborate the fact that anything can be posited as arising that arises dependently and that anything can be posited as existent that exists dependently.

Madhyamakāvatāra's statement that the very analytic rational inquiry into whether or not there is arising from self or other in reality **[63]** shows that arising does not make sense even conventionally [VI: 36]. This statement is clearly explained in the autocommentary to be refuting the existence through its own characteristic or the substantial existence of arising in convention [259a]. So the very arising of such effects as sprouts in dependence on such causes as seeds shows that there is no arising in any of the four extreme ways. This is because the refutation of causeless arising is easy, and, if they had the

24. See *Śālistambha-sūtra mDo sde* tsha 116a for a passage like this, but there are many statements of this formula throughout the sūtra corpus.

same essence, one giving rise to the other would be contradictory as has been previously shown. If they had different essences, they would be unrelated, and their arising would be contradictory. Thus there could not be arising from both either.

Therefore, just the way one has to maintain that the sprout arises in dependence on the seed makes it possible to refute the four extremes. This is the distinctive feature of the king of arguments—the argument from dependent origination. One should not disparage the middle path of dependent origination by asking, "Without the four extremes, how could anything arise?" If one understands the nonexistence of essential arising as the meaning of the verse "Neither from itself . . ." one will not be bereft of things on which to meditate. Therefore, those who aspire to meditate by understanding the reality of one's own mind as non-arisen should focus their practice on just this point.

1.1.2 Rebutting the claim that he is contradicting the sūtras in rejecting arising from another

This section has two parts: presenting the argument that this contradicts sūtra and rebutting the argument that this contradicts sūtra.

1.1.2.1 Presenting the argument that this contradicts sūtra

According to those of our own schools who accept inherent existence, since arising from self is pointless, arising from self makes no sense; and since this does not make sense, nor does arising from both make sense. Since causeless arising is completely stupid, it is also rejected. Nonetheless, according to them, saying "Nor from another" to reject arising from another does not make sense. This is because the Victor taught that the four conditions, which are others, are that which gives rise to all things.

> 2. There are four conditions. There is an efficient condition;
> And similarly, there is the objective condition,
> Immediate condition, and the dominant condition.
> There is no fifth condition.

Thus the four conditions are the efficient condition, the perceptual object condition, the immediate condition, and the dominant condition. **[64]** The phrase "and similarly . . . and" means that just like the efficient condition, the others, including the perceptual object condition, are conditions. With respect to the identification of the four conditions, some Buddhist schools maintain that the conditions are as they are described in the *Abhidharmakośa:*

"Efficient condition" refers to the five causes. [II: 64d]

That is, the five causes except for the facilitating causes [*Abhdharmakośa-bhāṣya, mNgon pa* ku 6b]. The objective condition is as follows:

The objective condition comprises all phenomena. [II: 62c]

That is, all the phenomena that are perceptual objects of the six kinds of consciousness [*Abhdharmakośa-bhāṣya, mNgon pa* ku 6a] The immediate condition is as follows:

Arisen mental processes and mental episodes;
The immediately preceding psychological states, except for the final ones. [II:62ab]

That is, the previously arisen mental processes and episodes, other than those of one entering nonresidual nirvana [*Abhdharmakośa-bhāṣya, mNgon pa* ku 6b] The dominant condition is as follows:

"Facilitative conditions" are explained to be the dominant. [62d]

They are thus said to be facilitative conditions [*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya, mNgnon pa* ku 5b]. The six kinds of cause according to *Abhdharmakośa* are

Causes are maintained to be of six kinds:
The facilitative cause, the simultaneous cause,
The homogeneous cause, psychological causes,
Ubiquitous causes, ripening causes. [II: 49]

But some schools say that "that which brings something about is its cause" presents the definition, and, therefore, that which has the nature of a seed that brings something into existence is its efficient condition. Just as a stick helps an old man stand up, that which gives rise to mental processes and mental episodes is the object, and that is the objective condition. The cause which has just ceased is the immediate condition of the arising of the effect. For example the seed which has just ceased to exist is the condition of the arising of the sprout. The *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says,

Just as the seed which has just ceased is the immediate condition of the sprout . . . [*dBu ma* 'a 249a]

In *Prasannapadā* also, in the context of the refutation of the immediate condition, the homogeneous immediate condition of the sprout is refuted [29a]. Buddhapālita also says the same thing [166b]. Therefore this is the system according to which material form also has a homogeneous immediate condition.

[65] That which, when it exists, gives rise to something else, is the dominant condition. *Prasannapadā* says that this comprises such things as that

which has previously arisen and that which arises simultaneously, as well as that which arises later [26a]. This is similar to the statement in the more felicitous translation of the *Prajñāpradīpa* that the conditions as they are conceived by the other schools are those that are arisen before us, those which are existent, and those which are no longer existent [53b]. This means, as it says in its subcommentary, that according to the Sthaviravādin school's nomenclature, the condition arisen before us, *viz.*, that arisen and present in direct perception by the sense faculties, is called "the objective condition"; the existent conditions are called "the efficient and dominant conditions"; and the no-longer-existent conditions are called "immediate conditions." [*dBu ma* wa 157a]

These are merely differences in nomenclature; consideration of the definitions shows that they refer to the same four conditions. Since such things as Ishvara are not conditions, it is ascertained that there is no fifth condition. As it is said in *Abhdharmakośa*,

> From the four, mental processes and mental episodes arise;
> From the three, the two meditative absorptions arise;
> The rest arise from two.
> But such things as Ishvara are not conditions because of sequence,
> etc.[25] [II: 64]

Therefore, when the statement that since effects do arise from these conditions—which are other in relation to those effects—things *do* arise from another is refuted, these opponents say that this contradicts the sūtras, and, therefore, that there is arising from another.

1.1.2.2 Rebutting the argument that it contradicts sūtra

The arising from another so described involves both cause and effect being inherently different from one another and their inherently arising. There are two arguments that together refute arising from another as a whole through refuting each of these aspects individually. We begin with the refutation of arising from another through the refutation of arising.

> 3. The essence of entities
> Does not exist in such things as the conditions.

25. The four are the four conditions; the three are the efficient condition, the psychological immediate condition, and the dominant condition; the two meditative absorptions are the absorption in form and the absorption in formlessness; the rest (the things besides the mental) include material form and nonmental compounds; the two are the efficient and the dominant conditions. Because Ishvara is a permanent universal cause, he cannot give rise to distinct things in sequence. The "etc." indicates that no permanent cause can give rise to impermanent things.

If the entity that is self does not exist,
The entity that is other does not exist.

"Does not exist" [I:2d] is the foundation of this explanation. What does not exist? The essence, or nature of the entity of such effects as sprouts. In what does it not exist? Neither in assemblages such as those including seeds: **[66]** not in either of these aspects individually nor in both of them together. Nor in anything other than them, as indicated by the word "etc." In what way does it not exist? Just as the jujube fruit in a basket is dependent on it. In this context, as *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says, "in" indicates the seventh—the locative—case [250b]. Therefore, it should be read that way.

When does it not exist? Prior to its own arising. Although in general things do not exist and arise at two distinct times, there are many cases where it is necessary to refute these two individually, in line with the opponent's conception. Therefore, the investigation into whether or not the sprout which is to arise exists prior to its arising is different from the investigation into whether or not the sprout exists prior to its own existence. The time when the effect is about to be arisen is the time of its arising. The time when it has already arisen is the time when it has arisen. Therefore, if it existed prior to its arising, it would have to exist at the time when it is about to be arisen. If they existed in those times and places, they would have to be perceived. But they are not perceived. There would be no point in their arising again. But they have to arise. Therefore they do not exist.

Since the effect that is to arise does not exist prior to its arising, that is, of the entity that is itself, an entity is that which has arisen in the present. Therefore, there is no inherently existent arising from another. How could one establish that if arising from another existed inherently, the effect would have to exist prior to its own arising? If these arguments cannot establish that, then all other arguments are just mere words. Therefore this must be established. Nothing related to this context is found in *Prasannapadā*. But this discussion is found in *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* in the context of the refutation of arising from another [250a]. Therefore that should be taken as a supplement.

As long as one accepts arising, the cessation of the cause and the effect's being about to arise should be taken to be simultaneous. Although this would not be irrational for those who accept mere arising and conventional arising, **[67]** it would be inconsistent for those who accept ultimate arising or arising through its own characteristic, because in the former case, although the two activities of the arising of the effect and the ceasing of the cause are simultaneous, the cause and effect do not need to exist simultaneously. In the latter case, if the two activities were simultaneous, cause and effect would have to be simultaneous.

The activity of the arising of the effect must depend on such things as the sprout as the agent, to which "this arises" refers. Therefore, these are the

dependent one and that on which it depends. If the dependent and that on which it depends existed ultimately, it would not be tenable for them to have different essences. Therefore, since activity always needs a basis, even at the time when the sprout is about to arise, the sprout would have to be already there as the basis of the activity of arising. It would follow that the cause and effect would have to be simultaneous. This is also undermined by the two previous arguments. Therefore its existence at that time would not be tenable.

In the context of conventional arising, just because two things are at one time the dependent one and that on which it depends, it is not necessary for them always to be so. Therefore these cases are not similar. *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> Without an agent arising is incoherent. [VI: 19d]

This text also says,

> If a non-arisen entity
> Anywhere exists,
> That entity would have to arise.
> But if it were nonexistent, what could arise? [VII: 17]

When arising from another is refuted through these arguments,[26] the Sanskrit term for "entity" [bhāva] in "the entity which is other" can also be explained etymologically as meaning *coming into existence*. In that case, the *nonexistence* of the entity which is self—that which is to arise—is not taken as a reason for the *nonexistence* of the other, but it *is* a basis for the refutation of *arising*.

In the context of the refutation of arising from another through the refutation of the other's being inherently existent, the nonexistent is just as was explained earlier. When is it nonexistent? When such things as seeds as conditions are not transformed. In this context, the "in" marking the seventh (locative) case **[68]** is explained in *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* to be a temporal locative as in "when this exists, this will come to be" [250b]. If the effect existed when the causes and conditions have not yet transformed, it would be without a cause and therefore nonexistent.

At the time when the cause exists, since the effect does not have any entity of its own, there is nothing in relation to which the conditions would be other. Therefore, such things as seeds do not have any entity of being another. That is, since they do not possess otherness there is no arising from other. Here, Jampa and Nyerbeh, being simultaneous, are other in mutual dependence. The seed and sprout are not simultaneous. Therefore, neither has an *other*. The reason for this statement is that if they were other through their own charac-

26. Reading *na* for *ni*.

teristic, they would have to be simultaneous; but this statement does not show that *mere* otherness requires simultaneity. Moreover, if the cause and conditions, being different in relation to the effect, existed through their own characteristics, then the effect on which they are dependent would have to exist at the time of the cause, as was shown in the previous argument.

Suppose one argued as follows: Just as the two activities of the rising and falling of the arms of a scale are simultaneous, the cessation of the seed and the arising of the sprout are simultaneous. The seed and sprout are thus simultaneous, and so they are different.

To this we reply as follows: The seed in the process of cessation is about to cease and is present. The sprout, which is in the process of arising, is about to arise, and is in the future. Therefore, although the two activities of arising and ceasing are simultaneous, the seed and the sprout are not simultaneous. The two ends of the scale are simultaneous. Therefore the example and that to which it is to be applied are not analogous.

Suppose one then argued in reply: In the *Śālistambha-sūtra* it says that just as the arms of the scale rise and fall in a single moment, so in the very moment the seed ceases, the sprout arises [*Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* 251b, paraphrased from the sūtra at *mDo sde* tsha 118b]. So is not the example of the scale presented? In response to this, it has been explained that although this has been presented, this does not show that the *cause* and *effect* are simultaneous.

One might think that although it does not show this, **[69]** it does not show instead that there is sequential arising from another and that even if that is not the case one has to accept arising as it is presented in that example.[27] But since *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says that it is not presented for the purpose of demonstrating arising through its own characteristic, although arising is accepted, arising through its own characteristic is not accepted [251b].[28] Then, what does that show? It shows that the arising of things which are simultaneous and dependently arisen can be taken to exist so long as it is not analyzed, and so is taken to be illusionlike. "Simultaneous" means that the arising of the effect depends on the activities of arising and ceasing occurring at the same time.

The refutation through the latter argument[29] goes as follows. With respect to the presentation of the meaning of the word "entity" in the phrase "entity which is other": the nonexistence of entity which is self is a ground for refuting the *other*; but it is not a ground for refuting *arising*. Therefore, since arising from another has been undermined by argument, although it is said in sūtra

27. He is referring to the example of the scales and is rejecting the opponent's interpretation of it.

28. This entire response and reply is paraphrased from *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya*.

29. In fact it appears that Tsong khapa refers here to the *former* of the two arguments mentioned at the beginning of this section, as he has just completed developing the arguments concerning the inherent existence of arising and now turns to inherent otherness.

that things arise from four kinds of conditions, the Buddha does not assert that there is arising from another, because he does not maintain things that contradict reason. The intent of these sūtras, as it is said, is not that action arises with ignorance as a condition *ultimately*, but that it does so *conventionally*. Thus even the sūtras that say that things arise from the four kinds of conditions do not present arising from another.

Up to this point, three arguments have been presented refuting arising from another. The first refutes arising and being other being co-instantiated; the second refutes arising; the third refutes this by undermining the otherness of cause and effect. Each of these modes of refutation is different from the others, and they must be clearly distinguished. The same thing should be understood in other contexts.

If they are not clearly distinguished, then there will be little development of the wisdom for investigating the way things really are, and one will not develop the confidence induced by seeing the special qualities of the teacher who taught what is definitive and in those masters who interpreted those teachings; **[70]** one would not develop the latent potential not to stray from the path in future lives; one would not partake of even a bit of the vast teachings of selflessness for the bodhisattvas. Therefore, one should search with reverence for each subtle nuance of reasoning in order to ascertain the arguments this great master has presented concerning the definitive meaning.

1.2 Refutation of the essence of conditions in that which gives rise to things

This section has three parts: the common refutation of essence of conditions; refuting each, and presenting other ways to refute them in common.

1.2.1 Common refutation of the essence of conditions

This section has two parts: the refutation of the conception of the conditions in terms of agency, and the refutation of the conception of the conditions in terms of action.

1.2.1.1 Refutation of the conception of the conditions in terms of agency

This section has two parts: the refutation of the conception of conditions on the ground that they perform the activity of arising, and the refutation of the conception of conditions on the ground that they give rise to effects.

1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of the conception of conditions on the ground that they perform the activity of arising

> 4. Action does not have conditions.
> There is no action without conditions.
> There are no conditions without action.
> Nor do any have action.

Those who maintain that arising comes from activity argue as follows: The context of the refutation of arising is the position according to which the effect arises directly from the conditions. That refutation does not undermine this! We do not maintain that consciousness arises directly from such things as material form, but rather that they are called "conditions" because they can accomplish the action that gives rise to consciousness. And since that action gives rise to consciousness, that action which gives rise to consciousness and has conditions is what directly gives rise to consciousness, but not the conditions, just like the action of cooking rice. They maintain that the conditions ultimately give rise to action, and that that in turn gives rise to the effect.

When consciousness is about to arise, consciousness is not there, but the action of its arising is there. The action of arising that exists at that time exists in the conditions such as the eye, and it has the nature of conditions. Therefore, arising from such action is maintained by the Sautrāntikas on up.

Even the two śrāvakas schools do not maintain that when consciousness is about to arise, without conditions such as the eye, [71] the action exists; or that even when the eye, and other such conditions exist, consciousness does not arise directly from them. The explanation that the two reificationist schools argue following the instructions of the grammarians is inapposite. Therefore, it makes sense to say that this is the assertion of the grammarians.

Although at the time when the effect is about to arise the action of arising is the cause of the effect, in general, it is not inconsistent to say that the action of arising and effect, respectively, are explained to be the basis and that which is based upon it as agent and action. This is just like the following case: Although the impermanence of the conch shell gives rise to sound, it is not inconsistent to say that the conch shell and its impermanence, respectively, are the basis and that which is based upon it. Thus if there were an action of arising that existed inherently, it would be produced by conditions and could give rise to consciousness. But there is no such thing, because if action were maintained to be existent at the time when consciousness is about to arise, then when consciousness is already arisen, it would no longer be necessary, because it does not make sense for a thing that has already arisen to arise again. Nor does it make sense that the action exists if consciousness is not

already arisen. Just as a previous argument showed, without an agent there would be no basis.

In general, at the time when it is about to arise, the consciousness to be arisen and the action of arising, respectively, do not constitute the basis and that which is based upon it. But if the action of arising existed through its own characteristic, even at that time, the consciousness would have to exist as the basis for the action of arising. Therefore, since it does not exist, the action does not exist either.

Although the arising of consciousness does not exist at the time when consciousness is about to arise, in consideration of the fact that it is about to come into existence, it is called "*its* arising." Moreover, in dependence on the existence of that arising, the consciousness that is about to come into existence is regarded as existent. Therefore it is not inconsistent to say that consciousness—the agent—and the action—the arising—are the basis and that which is based upon it, respectively. Just as *Madhyamakāvatāra* and its autocommentary say, to exist through mutual dependence is what it is to be essenceless and to be an imputed existent [VI: 58 and 267a]. This should be understood with respect to other things, including actions of arising and their agents as well.

It makes no sense to maintain that the action is in that which is in the process of arising, **[72]** because there is nothing that is in the process of arising that is neither arisen nor unarisen. Now suppose one said, "The action of arising—that which is begun, but not yet completed—is not arisen. Nor is it unarisen, having not yet begun. Therefore it is in the process of arising, and this is regarded as the action." This would not be tenable, because in saying, "This is in the process of arising," the basis of designation—the consciousness—must be regarded as being in the process of arising; and if some of its parts were arisen and some of its parts were unarisen then it would be half arisen and half non-arisen. Therefore, there is nothing that is neither arisen nor non-arisen. If, on the other hand, one were to imagine that something could be both arisen and not arisen, then since the present and the future would be in the process of arising, it would follow that all three temporal periods would be in the process of arising. As the *Catuḥśataka* says:

> Since that which is in the process of arising is half-arisen,
> That which is the process of arising is not arising.
> Or it would follow absurdly that everything
> Would be in the process of arising. [XV: 16]

Therefore, the action that gives rise to that which has not yet arisen does not exist ultimately. Nor is there any action that gives rise to that which has already arisen. Therefore, ultimately there is no such action. Therefore, action which does exist inherently does not have conditions such as eyes, just as since the son of a barren woman does not exist, he cannot have a cow. "Action has a condition" means *an action that has conditions has been produced by them.*

"But," someone might say, "there is action that has no conditions." However, there is no action that is not produced by conditions such as the eye—that is, without any condition. This is because if there were, since it would arise causelessly, it would follow that anything could arise from anything, and all effort would be pointless.

On the other hand, one might think, "Since there is no action, the conditions themselves produce the effects." However, not to have the action of arising is to lack the action of arising ultimately. Therefore there would be nothing to produce them. It follows that such things as eyes **[73]** are not conditions of an ultimately existent action of arising. In that case, how could they be conditions ultimately? They could not be! If, although they are not conditions of the action of arising, they were still conditions, it would follow that anything could be the condition of anything. In *Prasannapadā* with respect to explaining the meaning of "not having action," Candrakīrti has not drawn the distinction between action being produced by conditions and action not being produced by conditions, so there is no choice but to take the former one in this way. So this explanation follows Buddhapālita's interpretation [163b–164a].

Although even in our own system it is not accepted that conditions and effects are mediated by action, such things as the eye are the conditions that produce the action of the arising of the effect. It is necessary in our system to maintain that we accept that finally the effect arises from specific action produced by the conditions. This is shown by the arguments in the third line.

Suppose one said, "Only conditions that have action give rise to effects." We reply that when it says in the third line, "No," this must be brought to the fourth line.[30] So there are no conditions with inherently existent activity. Nevertheless, *Prasannapadā* explains that the phrase "do any" emphasizes the "No" [27b]. It has already been explained that there is no action whether with or without conditions.

According to *Prajñāpradīpa,* it should be read like this: Before the third line it is shown whether or not, prior to the arising of the effect, the conditions have action. Then joining the next and fourth lines, the phrase "do any" is explained to refer to this inquiry [56a–56b].

So the argument that since such things as the eye have action which gives rise to effects, they are conditions, is refuted in the first and fourth lines. The second line refutes the claim that although no action has conditions, there is action without conditions. The third line refutes the idea that although the conditions do not have action, they are nonetheless regarded as conditions.

30. *bya ba mi ldan skyed ma yin/bya ba ldan yod 'on te na//.* We have already done this, by using "nor" in the fourth line; the fourth line in Tibetan, read alone, could be read without a negation, though in the context of the third line, the negation is clearly there, with the *ma yin* taking long scope. The Sanskrit *kriyā vantaśca santyuta* is actually less clear, with the suffix *uta* expressing doubt or uncertainty more than negation. This ambiguous Sanskrit hence gets an explicit gloss from Candrakīrti which Tsong khapa follows here.

Therefore, any condition, whether or not it has action, is ultimately nonexistent. **[74]** It follows that it is pointless to think of the conditions as having inherently existing essence, and according to Buddhapālita, this is the consequence of all of these arguments [163a–163b].

1.2.1.1.2 Refutation of the conception of conditions on the ground that they give rise to effects

Suppose one argued as follows: What does this examination of whether or not conditions have action mean to anybody? Depending on conditions such as the eye, such things as consciousness arise. Therefore such things as the eye are regarded as inherently having the nature of conditions.

> 5. Since in dependence on these there is arising,
> These are *called* conditions.
> As long as those do not arise,
> Why are they not nonconditions?

The word "called" shows that the author does not accept this. *Prajñāpradīpa* explains that this reflects the view of the Sautrāntikas who maintain that at the time when the effect is about to arise the conditions have action, but that they do not have it beforehand [56b]. Since previously we have refuted the action of arising, we have just shown that it is not tenable that these are conditions. Therefore this statement makes no sense; to assert it is to commit an error. This is because as long as such effects as sprouts do not arise from such things as seeds, no activity of arising is apparent. So long as that is the case, why could it not be the case that these are not the conditions of those effects? That is, they are simply not the conditions!

One must accept this on the ground that something is called a condition just in virtue of having the action of giving rise to the effect. If something is not a condition, then an effect cannot arise from it, just as mustard oil cannot arise from sand.

One might think that prior to the time when the effect is about to arise, such things as grain are not conditions, but that at the time when it is about to arise, they become conditions. This would make no sense, because in that case, anything could be the condition of anything.

Now, suppose one replied that this is not erroneous, on the grounds that even those things which are not conditions become conditions in dependence on other conditions. Such things as grain are not previously conditions; but depending on other conditions, they become the conditions of the arising of such things as sprouts. Those other conditions are also not conditions when they do not have the property of giving rise to their own effects that are not

about to arise. [75] Therefore they also depend on other conditions, and it would have be the same for those as well. Thus there would be an infinite regress. In that case, the original condition could never exist.

If it is maintained that the criterion of being a condition is having the action of giving rise to effects, it would follow that at the prior stages, without it, nothing could be a condition. Then later, even at the time when the effects are about to arise, there would not be conditions, and so the effect would be without conditions.

Here is our position: Things are posited as conditions in virtue of performing the action of giving rise to effects. That action is performed in two ways: directly and indirectly.

1.2.1.2 Refutation of the conception of the conditions in terms of action

Suppose one says that the relation referred to by the statement, "This arises dependent on that," justifies saying, "*This* is the condition of *this object*."

> 6. For neither an existent nor a nonexistent thing
> Is a condition possible:
> If a thing is nonexistent, of what would its condition be the condition?
> If a thing is already existent, what would a condition do?

The relation has to be examined with respect to either an existent or a nonexistent object. With respect to a nonexistent object, it is not possible for there to be a condition. Not only that, but with respect to an existent object, it is also impossible for there to be a condition. But "neither . . . nor" indicates that a condition would have to be examined with respect to one or the other of these two. The colon indicates that the rest is connected.[31]

Here is why this is not possible: Nobody maintains that anything that is not an existent arises from a cause. Therefore, at the time of the cause there is no effect. But this is not also to assert the arising of a nonentity—the mere negation of the existence of the effect—at the time of the cause. Therefore this refutes the assertion that such things as sprouts that do not exist at the time of the cause arise.

In response to the question, "Since before it is arisen there is no effect, of what would its condition be the condition?" we ask in turn, "How could this be a condition, since there is no object of which it is the condition?" It does

31. The colon in the English translation translates the Tibetan particle *te* which indicates that what follows is logically connected to what has preceded. Tsong khapa is glossing this particle.

not make sense to say that the conditions of a nonexistent cloth are its warp and weft.

Now, suppose one argued as follows: The cloth arises from the warp and weft. Therefore, even though the cloth is not yet present, in virtue of the fact that it will come to exist later, it makes sense to say that the warp and weft are the cloth's conditions. To the extent that some things arise somewhere, that is the case. But in the context of the refutation of inherently existent arising, there is never any arising in that sense. **[76]** Therefore, how could it be possible to say that they are its conditions in dependence on the cloth, which comes into existence later?

Ordinarily, seeing cloth emerge from warp and weft, with the later cloth in mind, one says that the previously existing warp and weft are its conditions. In such assertions, one regards the warp and weft as conditions in dependence on the cloth. Depending on them as well, the cloth is regarded as the effect. As interrelated objects, they exist merely as dependent designations, and they are essenceless.

Therefore, since the previously existing warp and weft are regarded as conditions in dependence on the cloth that comes into existence later, one has to accept this as dependently designated. But with respect to inherent existence, this would not make any sense at all. This is an argument that refutes the opponent but that does not apply in the same way to us.

It would not even be tenable to argue that since the effects existed prior to the arising conditions, they are the conditions of an existent, because if the effect were existent, then what would the conditions do once again? This is just like the cloth that already exists: it does not need the warp and weft to bring it into existence.

Now suppose one said, "We call the warp and weft the conditions of the existent cloth, but we do not say that with respect to that which already exists, there is a further action of the conditions." According to all of our own schools except the Vaibāṣikas, an already-existent effect does not need to be caused to arise again. But they do assert that a cause gave rise to that existent. Similarly, although it does not have to depend once again on a cause, its existence is dependent on another, which is the cause; therefore it depends on a cause. We also accept this much. Therefore, what is distinctive about our position is that we show that if anything inherently existent arose from a cause, this would entail the false consequence that that which is already existent would have to arise again. That is why in the context of arguing that that which already exists does not need a condition, both in the *Buddhapālita* [164b] and *Prasannapadā* [28a] the word "again" is used. Since these two arguments occur many times, one should keep what has been said here in mind in all of those different contexts.

1.2.2 Refuting each

[77] This section has four parts: the refutation of the characteristic of the efficient condition, the refutation of the characteristic of the objective condition, the refutation of the characteristic of the immediate condition, and the refutation of the characteristic of the dominant condition.

1.2.2.1 Refutation of the characteristic of the efficient condition

Suppose one argued as follows: Since it is said, "Phenomena exist in virtue of having characteristics, and the causes are that which bring them into existence," the characteristic of the efficient condition is presented. Since its characteristic exists, the efficient condition exists essentially.

> 7. When phenomena are established
> Neither as existent, nor nonexistent, nor as both,
> How could one propose a cause for a thing's existence?
> In this case, it would make no sense.

If this characteristic existed ultimately, the efficient condition would exist ultimately as well. But this is untenable, because when we investigate to see whether a phenomenon which is an effect exists, does not exist, or both exists and does not exist at the time when its cause exists, we find that it was not brought into existence by a cause. In that case how could one propose that the inherently existent characteristic—that which brings it into existence—is the characteristic of an efficient condition? One could not.

Therefore, it makes no sense to say that since the characteristic of the efficient condition exists, the efficient condition exists ultimately. The argument for this has been presented earlier. However, Buddhapālita's explanation is presented here: If the effect, existing at the time when the cause exists, were brought about by the cause, there would be no point in its arising, and there would an infinite regress. If, while not existing at the time when their causes exist, such things as a sprout were inherently brought about by their causes, then, even though they are equally not present at time when its cause is, the sprout *arises*, while the rabbit's horns *do not* arise. This would not be tenable, because inherently existent entities do not ever exist, and with respect to them one cannot draw a distinction by saying, "This is, and this is not, the cause of that." Nor can it be the case that it both is and is not present at the time when the cause exists. This is because one object cannot have mutually inconsistent properties, and both previous errors would be committed [165a].

1.2.2.2 Refutation of the characteristic of the objective condition

Suppose someone said, "The objective condition exists essentially because it is the basis of such things as consciousness."

> 8. You have stated emphatically that it is not the case that
> An existent phenomenon has any object at all.
> So since phenomena are without objects,
> How could there be an objective condition?[32]

Is the objective condition the condition of the state of consciousness that exists prior to the object, or of a nonexistent state of consciousness? **[78]** For that which exists prior to the perception of an object, then since it would exist, an objective condition would not be necessary. This is because the objective condition is thought to be that which gives rise to the phenomenon, but that phenomenon would exist prior to the perception of the object.

If the phenomenon achieves its own status without depending on the object, then why would one imagine that it has an object? Therefore, existent phenomena such as consciousness do not have objects. This is merely a claim you make on your own! This consciousness does not have even the slightest relation to an object.

If one thinks that the state of consciousness is nonexistent prior to the perception of the object, then the the state of consciousness, which is nonexistent at the time when the object of consciousness exists, would have no connection to an objective condition. This is because at the time when the object exists there is no perceptual consciousness, and at the time when there is perceptual consciousness, there is no object.

Although the existence of the relation cannot be refuted conventionally, here the ultimate existence of the objective condition is refuted. It is possible to refute the ultimate existence of the connection, because if there were an ultimate connection it would have to exist in the nature of the two phenomena, and since a thing's nature is inextricable from it, they would have to be always and everywhere related. Thus, you have presented the effects—the mental processes and mental episodes—which are all without objects—that is, which are utterly objectless, as having objects.

In the previous verse the verb of existence [*yod pa*] was used in the Tibetan translation, and in the present verse the copula [*yin pa*] is used.[33] This is because

32. Here the phenomena in question are all *states of consciousness*. This must be borne in mind throughout this discussion.

33. This comment refers to the translation as in the *Buddhapālita*, [165a] and *Prajñāpradīpa* [59a], *not* to that in Candrakīrti [28], where the same verb [*yod pa*], the verb of existence, occurs in both contexts; the Sanskrit

the translator thought that this is in the context of the refutation of objective conditions of a nonexistent.

Apart from the specific difference in these two lines the earlier and later translations of the text are similar. They also differ in that Candrakīrti uses "since" [*ci ste*] [28a].[34] In *Prajñāpradīpa,* it is said that such things as the visual consciousness are ultimately to be without objects at all and **[79]** that is why it says, "You have stated emphatically that it is not the case that," and that is why "at all" is in the text. Therefore, since perceivers do not exist prior to the perception of the object, the object does not exist ultimately.

"Since" introduces a question. Saying "how could there be" presents the argument. Now, suppose someone argued as follows: The Buddha has said, "What phenomena have objects? All mental processes and mental episodes." Therefore, it has been taught that they have objects. Does your refutation of objects not contradict that? The reply to this is that no such error is committed because the Buddha has said that conventionally they have objects, but not ultimately. This is because the refutation through argument concerns ultimate existence. These sūtras are talking about conventional existence. So there is no contradiction, because you have to apply the modifying term to get the object of negation.

1.2.2.3 Refutation of the characteristic of the immediate condition

Now one might say that one thing, which has immediately ceased, is the immediate ocondition of another entity's arising. Therefore, the immediate condition exists essentially.

> 9. Since phenomena are not arisen,
> Cessation is not tenable.
> Therefore an immediate condition makes no sense.
> If something has ceased, how could it be a condition?

Resultant entities such as sprouts "are not arisen." That is, before they arise, the ceasing of causes such as the seeds, that is "cessation," "is not tenable." Therefore, it does not make sense to say that a thing that has just ceased is the immediate condition of another thing. If prior to the arising of the effect,

verb is the same in each verse. Despite this remark, Tsong khapa's commentary follows Candrakīrti as does our translation.

34. Earlier translations use "inasmuch as" [*de ltar*]. See the *Buddhapālita* [165b] and *Prajñāpradīpa* [59b]. While the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* and *Prasannapadā* were translated into Tibetan in the eleventh century, the *Buddhapālitī* and *Prajñāpradīpa* were translated in the eighth century.

the seed, having ceased, does not exist, then what would be the condition of the arising of the sprout? Nothing, because immediately prior to the sprout's having arisen there is no seed.

Nor does it make sense to say that the seed, having ceased, is the condition of a nonarisen sprout, because the seed that has ceased and the sprout that has arisen exist simultaneously. What would be the condition of the ceased seed? Nothing, because, before the seed has ceased there is no arising of the sprout. Therefore [80] if one imagines that the arising of the sprout occurs after the seed has ceased, then both would be causeless. And this also cannot be asserted.

"Then" is used for the following reason: If the cause has not ceased and the effect has not yet arisen, then not only does an immediate condition make no sense, but it does not make sense even if the cause *has* ceased, and "then" applies in this case.

The immediate condition must also be refuted in the case where the cause has ceased after the effect has arisen. Someone might argue as follows: The seed ceases immediately after the sprout has arisen. However, the immediate condition exists, because immediately after the sprout has arisen, it becomes the immediate condition of the ceased seed.

This can be refuted by replacing the phrase, "If something has ceased . . . , then" with "If something has arisen, how could it be a condition?" If the seed ceases when the action of the arising of the sprout is completed, what would the condition be for its cessation and for the arising of the sprout? Both would be causeless! The reason for this is that the action of the arising of the sprout, which is about to occur, is not present immediately prior to the cessation of the seed; nor is the action of the cessation of the seed, which is also about to occur, present immediately prior to the arising of the sprout.

Suppose one now argued as follows: When the seed is in the process of ceasing the sprout arises. Therefore, the activity of the seed's being in the process of ceasing is the condition of the sprout's being in the process of arising, and the activity of the sprout's being in the process of arising is the condition of the seed's being in the process of ceasing. Therefore, neither is causeless!

This would make no sense either, for the following reason: In the context of the inherent existence of cause and effect, the sprout must exist while it is in the process of arising. In that case, the ceasing seed and the arising sprout would exist simultaneously. Therefore there is no immediate precedence in this case. Even if one thought that the two actions occur simultaneously, it is still not tenable that either is an immediate condition. This is because in the context of existence through their own characteristic, if the two actions were simultaneous, there would have to be two simultaneous phenomena.[35]

35. The phenomena here (*chos*) are the bases of the actions.

It is not tenable that either the causes that have ceased or those that have not ceased prior to the arising of the effect are immediate conditions. **[81]** Therefore it does not make sense to say that the cause that has just ceased is the essentially existent immediate condition of the arising of the effect. Here we are referring to the third line. This is the third line for reasons of meter; but here we are commenting in an order reflecting the meaning of the verse. "Therefore an immediate condition makes no sense" should be placed in the fourth line. But we are not in disagreement with its placement after the first two lines.

Alternatively, referring to the argument refuting arising presented earlier,[36] the verse "phenomena" is discussed twice.[37] So, having refuted the essential existence of arising and ceasing, the ultimate existence of immediate conditions has been refuted. According to the previous explanation, the presentation of both the non-arisen and the non-ceased is from the conventional point of view. The two discussions of "If something has ceased" should also be understood as similar to the previous argument [166b]. Since this is explained extensively in the Buddhapālitī, we follow this exposition.

What does our own system say about whether the cause ceases or does not cease prior to the arising of the effect? According to *Madhyamakāvatāra,* the seed's being in the processes of ceasing and the sprout's being in the process of arising are said to occur simultaneously [VI: 18]. And Buddhapālita explains it the same way [166b]. Therefore, the ceased cause and the arisen effect are simultaneous. Thus, prior to the sprout having arisen, the activity of cessation in the cause in the process of ceasing occurs; similarly, prior to the cause having ceased, the activity of arising in the effect in the process of arising occurs; and these are the cause and the effect. So it is maintained that since the cessation of the cause and the effect are simultaneous, an immediate condition would be pointless.

Suppose someone asks, in the context of proving the termination of the cause to be the cause of the termination of the effect, how could *Yuktiṣaṣṭīkāvṛtti* say,

> The seed is not regarded as the cause of the sprout at the very time of its existence; but when it becomes nonexistent, it is regarded as the cause of the sprout. By way of analogy, when a previous state of consciousness becomes nonexistent, it is regarded as the immediate condition of a later state of consciousness. If it were a cause of another state of consciousness at the time when it existed **[82]** these two would have to exist simultaneously. It is said that the cause that

36. This refers to [I: 1].

37. This verse is mentioned twice in the discussion of this topic in *Prasannapadā*. (It is mentioned three times in the corresponding discussion in the *Buddhapālita*.)

has just ceased is the condition of the arising of the effect. This non-existent is also a cause. [*dBu ma* ya 16a]?[38]

But here is no error here. As *Catuḥśataka* says:

> When the cause transforms,
> It becomes the cause of another. [IX: 9ab]

Candrakīrti says in his commentary on this text, "without relinquishing its previous status the seed does not become the cause of the sprout"[*dBu ma* ya 151a]. He also says that at the time when the effect occurs, if the cause had not relinquished its status, that which is maintained to be the cause could not be the cause of that effect. Thus, without becoming nonexistent, the previous seed and state of consciousness cannot become causes. We can understand this on the basis of his statement that if one does not take them this way, cause and effect would be simultaneous, and until it transforms into something else nothing can become a cause; when it is transformed, it is no longer a cause; so, nor can *that* become a cause.

Prajñāpradīpa refutes the assertion that the earlier moment, which is in the process of cessation—between the later moment and which there is no interruption—makes room for the arising of the later moment and so is the immediate condition. The author does so by saying, "Those things that are not material forms do not have locations. Therefore they cannot make room for anything. *Abhidharmakośa* also says:

> The immediately past states of perceptual consciousness:
> That itself is mind. [I: 15ab]

Since states of mind that have just ceased are conditions, the opponent's view makes no sense." Thus he refutes it [60a]. He also refutes Buddhapālita's claim that something that has not ceased can be a condition [166a]. *Tarkajvālā* says:

38. There is a substantial difference between the version Tsong khapa quotes and the sDe dge reading of this passage. Tsong khapa has it as follows: *sa bon ni yod pa'i gnas skabs kho nar myu gu'i rgyur mi rtogs kyi med par gyur pa na myu gu'i rgyur rtogs pa'i dper/ gzhan gyis rnam shes snga ma med par gyur pa rnam shes phyi ma'i de ma thag rkyen du khas blangs pa lta bu ste/ rnam shes snga ma yod pa'i skabs su rnam shes gzhan gyi rgyu yin na de gnyis dus cig char du yod par 'gyur ro/ rgyu 'gags ma thag pa ni 'bras bu skye ba'i rkyen yin no zhes smra ba ltar med pa yang rgyu yin no/.*

The sDe dge edition reads: *sa bon yod pa'i dus nyid na/ myu gu'i rgyu'i dngos por ni shes par mi rung ste/ med par 'gyur ba'i tshe rgyur 'gyur ro/ dper na med par 'gyur ba'i rnam par shes pa nyid rnam par shes pa gzhan gyi de ma thag pa'i rkyen du khas blangs pa lta bu ste/ rnam par shes pa de yod pa'i dus na rnam par shes pa gzhan gyi rgyu yin no zhes ni brjod par mi nus so/ rnam par shes pa gnyis cig car du mi 'byung ba'i phyir ro/ yod pa dang med pa gnyis kyi gnas brtogs pa'i rnam par shes pa gzhan ni mi srid do/ la la rgyu 'gags ma thag pa ni 'bras bu skye ba'i rkyen yin no zhes bya bar mi rigs so zer ba yang yod/ de bas na med pa yang rgyur srid pas med pa rgyur mi rung ngo zhes bya bar mi rigs so/*

There is, however, no difference in meaning relevant to the present point.

> It appears that things such as sprouts arise from the ceased seeds. If the sprout were to arise without the seed having ceased, the absurd consequence would follow that it would arise from those in the granary. [*dBu ma* dza 105a]

[83] It is also said that since that which is ceasing and that which is arising are simultaneous, they are not each other's conditions. Seeing that these positions entail the erroneous consequence that it would be impossible for sprouts to arise directly from seeds and for earlier states of consciousness to be the direct immediate conditions of later states of consciousness, the aforementioned masters have made the statements just presented.

So, how do you interpret the following statements? "The immediately past states of perceptual consciousness . . ."; "The just ceased are the mental processes and mental episodes—that is, except for the last one" [*Abhidharmakośabhāṣya, mNgong pa* ku 2b]. The statement "the just ceased . . ." is made having in mind that at the time when the effect occurs the cause has ceased, and the effect arises immediately; but it does not mean that the cause has ceased immediately before the effect occurs. Otherwise, it would not make sense to say that the immediately past states of perceptual consciousness are mind, because disintegrated states of consciousness cannot constitute mind. Therefore, saying "ceased" for this condition shows that causes and effects must be understood as sequential, and by saying "immediate" it shows that the causation is direct.

1.2.2.4 Refutation of the characteristic of the dominant condition

Here, one might say that that which is such that when it exists, another arises, and when it does not exist another does not arise, is the dominant condition, and it exists essentially.

> 10. Since there is no existence
> Of essenceless things,
> The statement "When this exists, this will arise"
> Is not tenable.

Since they are dependently arisen, all phenomena are essenceless. Therefore, their existence is without essence. Therefore, it is neither tenable to say that the cause to which "when this exists" refers, nor that the effect to which "this will arise" refers exists essentially. Since that it not tenable, for what could there be a dominant condition? Therefore, the dominant condition does not exist essentially. Therefore, nor do the conditions exist essentially, even in virtue of their characteristics.

1.2.3 Other ways to refute them in common

This section has three parts: the refutation of the thesis that conditions have essence on the grounds that effects arise, **[84]** the refutation of the effect either having or not having the nature of conditions essentially; and the refutation of the criterion distinguishing between having the nature of conditions and having the nature of nonconditions.

1.2.3.1 Refutation of the thesis that conditions have essence on the grounds that effects arise

Suppose someone said that although it cannot be said that entities come into existence through the conditions, since we see that such things as cloth arise from such things as thread, we know that these are the conditions of the effect.

> 11. The effect is neither in the several
> Nor in the united conditions at all.
> How could something not in the conditions
> Arise from the conditions?

The effect—the cloth—is not at all in the conditions, such as the thread, scissors, the shuttle, the needle or the loom severally or jointly "at all," that is, in any way. How could the cloth, which is not in the conditions such as thread, etc., arise inherently from them? That is, it could not, just as oil cannot arise from sand. Why could it not? If the cloth existed in each of the conditions, is it entirely in each, or partly in each? In the first case, it would not need so many causes, because each one, without depending on the others, could give rise to it. In the second case, each one, also not depending on the others, could give rise to a part of it. Since it is not possible to maintain this, it is neither the case that each condition has the whole nor that each condition has a part of it. Therefore, nor do the united conditions.

Prasannapadā presents a simple refutation: The cloth is not in each condition severally because if this were the case, one would see it, and from a plurality of causes it would follow that there would be a plurality of effects. Then Candrakīrti presents another refutation: It is not in the assemblage of the thread, etc., because it is not in each individual part, and because the single effect would arise in pieces [29b]. The latter argument goes like this: If the cloth were in the assemblage, then the members of the assemblage would each have a part of the cloth. In that case, as we saw previously, since each would be able to give rise to a part, the cloth would arise in pieces.

Suppose one said that although effects such as cloth are not in the con-

ditions, they arise from those conditions; so your earlier arguments do not apply. **[85]**

> 12. However, if without that,
> It arose from these conditions,
> Why does it not arise
> From that which is not a condition?

If that were the case, then why do such things as cloth not arise from such things as grass? It would have to! These arguments have been explained before.

1.2.3.2 Refutation of the effect either having or not having the nature of conditions essentially

Suppose someone argued as follows: If the effect and the conditions are different, then it should make sense to determine analytically whether or not the effect is in the conditions. But the effect just has the nature of the conditions.

> 13. If the effect had the nature of the conditions,
> The conditions would not have their own nature.
> How could an effect of something without its own nature
> Have the nature of conditions?

It would not make any sense to say that the effect has the nature of the conditions or is a transformation of the conditions, because if such things as the thread were inherently existent, it could be said that the cloth has that nature; but those conditions do not essentially have their own nature, because they are merely posited through imputation based upon their parts. Therefore, how could an effect—such as cloth—of something that is essentially without its own nature, have the nature of conditions such as thread? It could not! About this *Catuḥśataka* says:

> Cloth comes into existence from causes.
> The causes come into existence from others.
> How could something that does not exist on its own
> Give rise to something else? [XIV: 13][39]

39. The sDe dge edition of *Catuḥśataka* as well as rGyal tshab's commentary uses the example of a pot, not cloth, and rGyal tshab follows sDe dge. Tsong khapa substitutes cloth; the third and fourth lines in the sDe dge are *gang la rang las grub med pa/ de yis bzhan po ji ltar skyed//* instead of *gang zhig rang gis grub med pa/ des bzhan skyed par ji ltar 'gyur//*. The Skt edition of *Prasannapadā* as well as its sDe dge edition, agrees with Tsong khapa's version in the final two lines, although it uses "cloth" as the example.

So there are no effects that have the nature of the conditions. Now, suppose one said that the effect has as its nature something that is not the conditions, because, while it has a nature, it is not tenable to say that it has the conditions as its nature.

> 14. Therefore, effects have neither the nature of conditions,
> Nor the nature of non-conditions.

There are no effects with the nature of things that are not conditions, because seeing that it is not tenable that the cloth has the nature of the thread, it would make no sense to assert that it has the nature of grass. Although we have already refuted the cause and effect having the same nature earlier, here their having the same nature is refuted, but the arguments refuting their having the same nature are not the same.

1.2.3.3 Refutation of the criterion distinguishing between having the nature of conditions and having the nature of nonconditions

Now someone might argue as follows: Although you have refuted the existence of effects **[86]** there is a clear criterion for being a condition or a noncondition. It is just as only tahini comes from a sesame seed, but butter does not; and just as only butter comes from yoghurt, but tahini does not; and neither of these comes from sand. You yourself have also said that "from that which is not a condition" [I:12d]. If there were no effects called "butter" and "tahini," it would make no sense to say that sesame seeds and yoghurt are conditions as opposed to nonconditions. Therefore effects and conditions exist essentially.

> 14cd If there are no such effects,
> How could there be conditions or nonconditions?

Here you have said that there is a ground of the criterion distinguishing between being a condition and a noncondition of such effects as tahini arising or not arising. But since it has been shown earlier that there is no effect that has the nature either of conditions or nonconditions, how could there be an essential criterion that would determine whether this is or is not the condition of that?

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

There are those who are incapable of reasoning and who merely rely on scriptures, and who say that the master's profound arguments showing that things are essentially unarisen are mere sophistries presented in abstruse treatises.

In order to refute them, and in order to show that all of the sūtras that present things as non-arisen are explained by this chapter, a brief indication that this is corroborated by citations from definitive sūtras is presented. The *Āryaratnākarasūtra* says,

> Whatever is empty and cannot be perceived
> Is like the tracks of a bird in the expanse of the sky. [*mDo sde* tha 285b]

This shows that insight free from fabrication, which is congruent with reality, is similar to this analogy. Reality is like this:

> That which has no entitihood anywhere
> Can never be the cause of anything else.
> That whose entitihood is not found is essenceless.
> How could it be the condition of another? [Ibid., 285b]

[87] Causes and conditions do not essentially have the nature of being producers.

> How could something essenceless be given rise to by another?
> Thus the Tathāgata has presented causation. [Ibid., 285b]

Thus it is said that the Victor has stated and argued that the effects are empty—that they do not have the nature of being essentially produced.

> All phenomena are immutable and stable;
> Unchangeable, without turmoil and peaceful,
> Just as empty space is not seen.[40]
> The ignorant are confused about this. [Ibid., 285b]

This statement shows that the way phenomena really are is immutable, etc. Just as space is not understood as anything but the mere absence of obstructions, such as mountains, reality should be understood as the mere absence of fabrications, such as mutability and instability.[41] Unless they realize this point, beings wander in cyclic existence.

> Just as mountains are unshakable.
> Phenomena are unshakable,
> Without death, transformation or birth:
> So the Victor has presented all phenomena. [Ibid., 285b]

This statement shows that the essential emptiness of phenomena cannot be interpreted in any other way; phenomena are without death, transformation, etc.

40. There is a "track" not seen in the space in the Sanskrit version; it is omitted in the Tibetan. Tsong khapa follows the Tibetan.

41. Here we read *mi rten pa* for *rten pa*.

Phenomena are neither born nor come into existence;
Nor die, nor transform, nor age.
The lion among men has shown this
And has led hundreds of sentient beings to see this. [Ibid., 261b]

This passage shows that he has enabled his disciples to grasp the fact of being essentially birthless and deathless. Showing this explicitly implies that others also should lead sentient beings to see that.

That, the entitihood of which does not exist anywhere,
Is also not any other thing, and cannot be found.
It is not internal; nor can it be found externally.
The protector has led them to see this. [Ibid., 262a][42]

This passage shows that any phenomena, no matter who seeks them, **[88]** will be found to have neither their own nor any other's entity. He led sentient beings to see this fact. This shows how disciples should develop their understanding of the definitive meaning.

The Tathāgata has said of those who go towards pacification
That no goer can be found.
They are proclaimed to be free from going.
Through their liberation, many sentient beings are liberated. [Ibid., 262a]

The meaning of this passage is as follows: If the ones who proceed towards pacification are sought they are not found. However, they are free from the cycle of five transmigrations, and, having liberated themselves, are said to be able to liberate many others. Just because when they are analyzed rationally, they are not found, this does not mean that such things as liberation, those who achieve it, or their achievement are thereby refuted.

So, these arguments in the first chapter should be understood as the eye through which all of the scriptures that present non-arising in this and similar ways can be seen.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

Here are summaries of the following three matters: the way in which the object of negation refuted in this chapter is grasped, what is established after it is

42. In sDe dge this reads differently: *gang la ngo bo ci yang ma 'chi zhing/bzhen gi ngo bo'ang su kyang ma snyer pa/nang na ma lags slad rol dag na yang/ngo bo med nyer de la mgong pos bkod//,* which would read: That which is not an entity/Is also not found by anyone to be another entity./Entity is found neither externally nor internally. The protector led them to see this.//

refuted through arguments, and in light of that, how to posit causes, conditions, and effects. When such things as seeds and fuel are seen or heard to be performing the action of giving rise to such things as sprouts and fire, respectively, to take both cause and effect not as merely nominally imputed, but as the objects that are the bases of nominal imputation, grasped as inherently existent produced and producer, is to grasp the object of negation.

When the object so grasped is maintained to exist in that way, through an analysis asking whether this arisen effect has the same essence as or a different essence from its causes and conditions, with respect to the effect, the essence of the produced is refuted, and when one analyzes the conditions that produce the effect, asking whether they exist or not when the cause occurs, then with respect to the cause the essence of the producers is refuted. **[89]** This is because Nāgārjuna presents a position, the primary focus of which is refutation, according to which an inherently existent entity cannot be posited as having causes, conditions, or effects.

Here is why he does this: Since from beginningless time, we are accustomed to grasping causes and effects as existing inherently, this is difficult to dispel. When that essence is refuted, the tenability of action and agent in the context of essencelessness can easily be established. Nāgārjuna does not focus here primarily on how we set out action and agent conventionally in our own system.

Arguments such as "Neither from itself nor from another" that express refutations always involve analysis of how the objects taken to be the bases of conventional imputation exist. Therefore, they refute any arising that is not merely imputed, but they do not refute *mere* arising. Having this clearly in mind, in most of the chapters Nāgārjuna does not apply the modifying term to the object of negation. The modifying term is indeed applied in many places. He does not always explicitly apply it, thinking that it is easy to see that when it is applied in any one context, when the grounds are the same, it should be supplied in other cases even where it is not explicitly applied.

I have explained in *Lam rim chen mo* [580, translation by Cutler et al., III, pp. 128–129] that, according to *Prasannapadā,* when such statements as "Dependent origination is without cessation, without arising" [4a] are shown to be noncontradictory to sūtras where the existence of such things as cessation is asserted, they are taken to express the absence of such things as cessation and arising with respect to the nature of the object of uncontaminated wisdom. They refute ultimate arising, but they do not refute conventional arising. It is also explained that this is the intention behind statements in sūtra that things arise from the four conditions. Even the refutation of the objective condition is said to be with respect to the ultimate and not the conventional [*Prasannapadā,* 28b]. Therefore, it is crystal clear that the modifying term should be applied to the object of negation, and this kind of case occurs frequently. But one should not be misled by lexical glosses where this is not applied frequently.

The commentary to *Catuḥśataka* makes this point very clearly: **[90]**

> If one maintained that in virtue of the complete refutation of arising via this analysis, compound phenomena are presented as nonarisen, then it would not be like an illusion, but would be like something that is perceived by the son of a barren woman and the like. Lest the absurd consequence follow that there would be no dependent arising, one should not compromise with those who say this. Instead, one should consistently follow the analysis according to which they are illusionlike. [*dBu ma* ya 225a]

Prasannapadā [88b] quotes the following statement in the *Lankāvatārasūtra*:

> I have said that all things are nonarisen meaning that they are *essentially* nonarisen. [*mDo sde* Ca 79b]

If cause and effect are refuted in the context of existence through their own characteristic, cause and effect can be taken to be merely nominally imputed, and merely posited through the force of nominal conventions. As the *Buddhapālita* says, in the beginning of the first chapter, "To say that something arises is merely convention" [161b], and as it says, at the very end of the chapter, "To say that something arises is to say that it merely exists conventionally" [168b].

Thus, when one sees that in the context of inherent existence it does not make any sense to accept cause and effect, since beneficial and harmful causes and effects are undeniable, they exist; and since it makes no sense to posit them in the context of inherent existence, one must accept that they are tenable only when posited as existing merely through the force of nominal convention. Since ordinary people are thoroughly habituated to positing producer and produced as existing through their own characteristics, when this is refuted, they find it awkward to posit them as existing merely through the force of nominal convention. However, since there are only these two modes of positing them, and since the first one is untenable, one should push one's mind in the direction of the second one, since it is inevitable.

It makes no sense to think that it is untenable to say that since producer and produced exist, cause and effect exist; and therefore that they are nominally imputed. **[91]** The reason that this makes no sense is that, as has been explained, the word "merely" means neither that no objects exist besides names nor that their being cognized by authoritative cognition is precluded. On the other hand, although the phrase "things exist merely in virtue of nominal imputation" means that it is impossible that they exist without being posited by nominal convention, it does not mean that everything posited by nominal convention exists.

So, taking whichever of the internal and external causes and conditions is

clearest as an example—such as seeds and sprouts, or consciousness arising depending on sense faculties and objects—and seeing how it is grasped in the way previously explained, and then focusing either on the cause or on the effect, through the argument refuting their inherent existence, one should refute all of the remaining essence. If even the slightest bit is not refuted, then being bound by that grasping, liberation cannot be attained. Then causes and effects will appear to be merely nominally imputed. Then, since the benefits and harms of causes and effects are undeniable, one should develop ascertainment, thinking as follows: "Although in the context of mere imputation, causes give rise to effects, it is erroneous for me to grasp them in the context of existence through their own characteristics." One should not allow this to undermine one's ascertainment of the dependent arising of causes and effects. According to our own system, if these things are posited as existing conventionally in the sense of existing merely from the standpoint of illusion, and are not posited in a framework according to which there are causes and effects, this would be a great error and a great deprecation of reality.

This is the commentary on the first chapter, having fourteen verses, called "the examination of conditions."

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CHAPTER II

Examination of Motion

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  - 1.1 Extensive explanation
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      - 1.1.1.1 Refutation through the examination of action
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        - 1.1.1.3.1 Refutation of initial beginning
        - 1.1.1.3.2 Refutation of the path on which one goes
        - 1.1.1.3.3 Refutation of the opposite of going
        - 1.1.1.3.4 Refutation of stopping at the end of going
        - 1.1.1.3.5 Refutation of the argument for staying

1.1.1.4 Refutation through the examination of activity
1.1.1.4.1 Refutation through examination of whether the goer and going are identical or different
1.1.1.4.2 Refutation through examination of whether or not positing activity in the goer involves two actions
1.1.2 Refutation of the activity common to agent and action
1.2 Drawing conclusions
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the first of the three parts of the text, the demonstration that dependent origination is essentially empty, and within that, we are still in the first of its two sections, the main point. Within that section we are still in the first of its two parts, the brief presentation. We have concluded the first section of the brief presentation, the refutation of the essence of phenomena through the examination of the agency and action of cause and effect **[91:18]**, and we now turn to the second section, the refutation of the essence of the self through the examination of the action and agent of going and coming. This chapter constitutes that second section. This chapter has three parts: the explanation of the the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here it should be stated that although it has been explained through the refutation of arising **[92]** that the nonexistence of such things as cessation is established in order to establish that there is no coming or going in dependent origination, it is necessary to provide refutatory arguments specific to that topic. Here the refutation of coming and going should be understood as the refutation of coming and going as the nature of the object of uncontaminated wisdom. The commentary to the eighth chapter explains that since the goer and the action of going exist in mutual dependence, but do not exist inherently, the inherent existence of going and coming is the object of negation.

This section has two parts: the extensive explanation and drawing conclusions.

1.1 Extensive explanation

This section has two parts: the refutation of activity in each of agent and action and the refutation of the activity common to agent and action.

1.1.1 Refutation of activity in each of agent and action

This section has four parts: the refutation through the examination of action, the refutation through the examination of the agent, the refutation of the argument for the existence of activity, and the refutation through the examination of activity.

1.1.1.1 Refutation through the examination of action

This section has two parts: the refutation of activity common to the three intervals and the refutation of the activity particular to that which is being gone over.

1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of activity common to the three intervals

> 1. Now, where one has gone one does not go.
> Where one has not yet gone one does not go.
> Apart from where one has gone and where one has not gone,
> That over which one goes cannot be conceived.[1]

If the activity of going existed inherently, it would have to be there in any of the three intervals of the path, but this is not tenable. One does not go in the interval of the path over which one has previously gone; there is no activity of going there, because the activity of going is in the present. The aspect of the interval of the path that is the activity of going that has ceased is the gone.

The "Now" in the first line indicates the temporal order of the refutations. Nor does one go in the interval of the path over which one has not yet gone, because in that which has not gone the activity of going has not yet arisen. The activity of going is in the present.

Nor does the activity of going belong to that over which one goes essentially.[2]

1. The "Now" reflects *re zhig*, or Skt *tāvat*, which adds no real sense to the verse, but indicates that it is a starting point of analysis. We include it explicitly because both Tsong khapa and Candrakīrti refer to it explicitly. The same issue arises frequently.

2. Throughout this chapter the Tibetan text both of the root verses and the commentary frequently uses the words *gro, song, ma song,* and *bgom pa,* which are generally translated as *goes, went, did not go,* and *going,* respectively. Here, however, they are used in several different ways, reflecting the original Sanskrit root text and the Sanskrit commentaries in which verb inflections not possible in Tibetan (or in English) make it clear that often they are referring to spatial or temporal locations where going, etc., are occurring/did occur, etc., or sometimes to the agents of those actions. We are not indicating at each spot what the justification is for our translation choice, as that would become tedious. But we are working to follow the reading of each verse both as it is supported by the Sanskrit and as it is interpreted by Tsong khapa following Candrakīrti and Buddhapālita.

This is because, having excluded both the place the goer has already traversed and that which he has yet to traverse, there is no further truly existent interval of a path that can be discerned authoritatively in which the process of going is occurring. **[93]**

One might think that the place where the goer is putting his foot down is that which is being gone over, and that it is neither where the activity of going has ceased in the gone, nor is it where the activity will be which has not yet arisen in the not-yet-gone; therefore the claim that there is nothing apart from that over which one has gone and that over which one has not gone is not accurate. However, since the foot is also imputed on the basis of an assemblage of particles, it has many front and back parts. When the goer is putting his foot down, the rear of the particles in the toes are regarded as on the interval of the path over which he has gone. The front of the particles in the heel are regarded as on the interval of the path over which he has not yet gone. Apart from the particles, there is no foot. Therefore, apart from the gone over and the not-gone over, there is nothing that is being gone over.[3]

Suppose one argued as follows: While *Prasannapadā* explains it this way [31a-b], it is not tenable that the third alternative—that is, neither—is refuted by this explanation. If it were tenable, it would follow that it would be impossible for the foot to step on the place stretching from the heel to the toe, because it would not be stepped on by each part of the front and back; and apart from these parts there is no foot. Although where the front and back of the heel and toes, respectively are placed, are regarded as upon that over which he has gone and that over which he has not yet gone, respectively, this does not eliminate the suspicion that the place on which the toes and heels are stepping is the third alternative. This is like the example of the foot.

Moreover, if there were no interval of the path over which there is going, there would be no present interval of the path. In that case there would be neither past nor future intervals of the path—those in which activity has disintegrated or not yet arisen. However, according to *Prasannapadā* [31a], the gone over and the not-yet-gone over are explained to be the intervals of the path where activity which has disintegrated and that which has yet to arise occur, respectively. But to say that there is no interval of the path other than these two, over which there is going, would be erroneous, as has been charged. Here we do not say that there is no interval of the path other than these two over which there is going; rather, we refute the inherent existence of the interval of the path over which there is going, and thus we refute the activity of going in that interval.

3. By "the back part of the toe" and by "the front part of the heel," Tsong khapa means that which is immediately in front of, and that which is immediately behind, respectively, a dividing line in the middle of the sole, dividing the bottom of the foot into two halves.

[94] Since the part of the path on which the foot is put down—the part where the back of the toes is being put down—is where the disintegration of the activity of going occurs; and since where the front of the heel is being put down is where the activity of going has not yet arisen, the part of the path in between these would have to be defined in relation to these two, but apart from the disintegrated activity and the activity that has yet to arise, it does not exist as a third alternative.

If there were a foot that existed through its own characteristic apart from these two parts, then although the middle part of the path defined in relation to them is neither of these two, there would, in terms of the whole foot, be a third alternative that would be neither of these two. However, since there is not an inherently existent foot apart from these parts, the path on which going occurs, which depends on this, does not exist inherently either.

One might think that although the middle part of the path, defined in relation to the front and back parts, is not a third alternative, there *is* a third alternative: the places where the front and back parts are being placed down, depending only on themselves. But according to the *Commentary,* just as the front and back parts of the foot are explained, so the particles of the heel and the toe should be examined in terms of the relation between their eastern and western parts [31b]. Therefore, they also should be so examined.

This can also be refuted through the argument presented earlier refuting the existence of that which is in the process of arising. There, with respect to the statement, "Although neither the arisen nor the non-arisen arises, the sprout in the process of arising arises," the way of determining whether or not the third alternative is eliminated is similar to what we have just explained. Moreover, if any part of the sprout is not arisen, then since it would be simply non-arisen, one would have to assert that something, part of which is arisen and part of which is non-arisen, is arising. In that case, it would be half arisen, half non-arisen; and since apart from these two halves there is no sprout, apart from the arisen and the non-arisen, there is nothing in the process of arising.

Similarly that over which one has gone and not gone can be understood in terms of the front and the back parts of the foot. **[95]** Since there is no inherently existent foot apart from these two parts, there is no inherently existent process of going occurring partly in that over which one has gone and partly in that over which one has not gone. The parts of the foot are not the foot; but neither is the foot a separate object distinct from those. Thus the existence of the foot through its own characteristic is refuted, but the existence of the foot is not refuted. This has been explained before, and it will be explained later, so we will not discuss it any further here.

Thus, these arguments refute the inherent existence of the part of the foot that is being placed on the path as a third alternative with respect to the whole foot. But the third alternative with respect to the path is not refuted simply on the grounds that that over which one has gone and that over which one has

not gone are mutually exclusive. This is because, as the *Commentary* itself says, the two activities—the activity of going that has ceased and that which has yet to arise—occur in that over which one has gone and that over which one has not gone, and the presently occurring activity of going is explained to be where one is *going* [31a].

Here, some say that the foot is not any of its parts. Nor is the foot anything other than them. Therefore there is no foot. No single part is placed on the whole stretch of path from that on which the heel is placed to that on which the toe is placed. And apart from them, there is nothing that could be placed upon it. Therefore it is not possible for the path to be trodden. In other contexts as well, they say similar things, and pretend to be explaining the meaning of Madhyamaka. However they are persisting in great errors regarding the proper explanation of dependent arising as the middle path.[4]

1.1.1.1.2 Refutation of the activity particular to that which is being gone over

This section has two parts: the presentation of the opponent's position and the argument for its refutation.

1.1.1.1.2.1 Presentation of the opponent's position

2. Where there is motion, there is going.
Since there is motion in that which is being gone over,
But neither where one has gone nor where one has not gone,
It follows that *going* is in that which is being gone over.

Some argue as follows: You have presented that over which one has gone and that over which one has not gone as where the activity of going has disintegrated and as where the activity of going has yet to arise, respectively. According to that, wherever there is motion—the activity of raising and setting down a foot occurs—there the activity of going occurs. Moreover, it is a fact that motion is perceived in the going of the goer. Because motion does not occur where one has gone, nor does it occur where one is yet to go, but it does occur where one is going, the activity of going takes place at the very place where the motion occurs. **[96]** Therefore, *going* is said to be where one is presently going.

Here the word "*going*" refers to the interval of the path on which one is

4. It is not clear to whom Tsong khapa is referring here.

going to indicate that activity is occurring there. The later occurrence of the word "going" refers to going to a different location. According to Buddhapālita, the word "his (*gang gi*) [169a] refers to the goer,[5] and Candrakīrti seems to agree[6] [31b]. According to Bhāvaviveka, if that were so, the words "it follows that" would be without a mate[7] [64b], and since it is certain that the basis of motion and the activity of going is the path over which something is presently going, and the phrase "his path" would refer to the goer as the basis, this would make no sense. The activity of going in the interval of the path over which one has gone and in that over which one is yet to go has been refuted earlier. Thereby, it has been established that the activity of the goer is where one is presently going. Therefore, referring to a person by using the word "his" would make no sense.

Buddhapālita does not commit these errors. This is because he must have had the following considerations in mind: There are many places where the words "since" and "where" are used but "thus" and "there" are not explicitly used; the goer has the activity of going; this is similar to the fact that, although the occurrence of the activity of going in the interval that has been gone over and in that which is yet to be gone over has already been refuted, it would not be redundant to refute the *effort* involved in going in the intervals that have been gone over and which are yet to be gone over as well. Here the translation of the phrase "Since . . . in that which is being gone over" is not accurate, and so here the older version is followed.[8]

Here some say that the previous verse explains in general that since the path over which one has gone and over which one has not yet gone—that which one has traversed and that which one has not traversed—are mutually

5. As we explain in more detail below (n.6), the Tibetan edition of the *Buddhapālita* reads *gang gi (his)* in the second line, whereas the Tibetan edition of the root text and of *Prasannapadā* read *gang phyir*, reflecting different recensions of the Sanskrit root text. This line, as Buddhapālita would read it, would translate, "Motion is in *his* path" (that over which he is going). So here, Tsong khapa is discussing the fact that Buddhapālita takes this line to refer to the *goer*, whereas Bhāvaviveka reads *gang phyir* (*since*) and defends this reading.

6. Buddhapālita's [168b–169a] and Bhāvaviveka's [64b] commentaries include different versions of the second line of this verse from that found in *Prasannapadā: de yang gang gi bgom pa la//* for *de yang gang phyir bgom pa la/ /*in the *Buddhapālita* and *"/de yang gang gis bgom pa la/* in *Prajñāpradīpa*. Each is very different from *Prasannapadā*, and they differ slightly from each other (genitive *vs.* instrumental case in the pronoun phrase). These differences in the respective Tibetan translations are so marked that they must reflect distinct recensions of the Sanskrit text of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*; hence the debate over which reading is correct. In existing editions of *Prasannapadā* there is no evidence that Candrakīrti supports Buddhapālita's reading, and the version of the verse he includes and his commentary follow Bhāvaviveka. Bhāvaviveka indicates that the text *should* be read as "therefore" on grammatical and philosophical grounds. Avalokitavrata's commentary on *Prajñāpradīpa* [*dBu ma* wa 227a–229a] argues at length for Bhāvaviveka's position.

7. In English "since" of course does not need a second term with which to coordinate. In Tibetan and Sanskrit, this form of marking consequence uses two lexical items (*gang phyir* and *de phyir* or *yataḥ* and *tataḥ*, respectively). Bhāvaviveka is arguing here on grammatical grounds that on Buddhapālita's reading, the coordinating particle in the fourth line would be without a mate in the second.

8. The *Buddhapālita, Prajñāpradīpa*, and Avalokitavrata's commentary were all translated by Jñanagarbha and Cog ro in the eighth century; *Prasannapadā* and the root text were translated by Tilakakalaśa and Pa tshab nyima grags in the eleventh century.

exclusive, a path over which one is going distinct from these two is impossible; and that this verse presents the *reason* that that over which one has gone and that over which one has not yet gone are mutually exclusive. But this interpretation is not tenable. The premise—that they are the loci of action that has disintegrated and action that has not yet arisen, respectively—cannot be established on the basis of the fact that that over which one has gone and that over which one has yet to go preclude any third alternative. *Prasannapadā* says,

> If it is that over which one has not yet gone, how can there be going? And if there is going, how can it be that over which one has not yet gone? [31a]

Since it explains that if there is going it cannot be that over which one has not yet gone, **[97]** it would have to be accepted that it is that over which one has gone. But in that case, since it is a disintegrated action, it would be contradictory for it to be going either. Therefore, since it has been explained that the place which has been traversed by the goer is that over which he has gone, and the place which has not been traversed is that over which he has not yet gone, generally, he would have to traverse the place where he is going and it can be neither of the two: neither that which has been traversed, nor that which has not been traversed, because this would be like traversing a body of water. Therefore, although in general there would only be two alternatives with respect to the path—one must either traverse or not traverse a path, according to our own system, in this context, that over which one has gone and that over which one has not yet gone are as they have been previously explained. Therefore, it is not necessary for the path to be confined to these two alternatives. Thus, the phrase "apart from that over which one has gone and that over which one has yet to go" is not regarded as providing an argument for these two being mutually exclusive. Nor does the present verse present an argument for their being mutually exclusive.

1.1.1.1.2.2 The argument for its refutation

This section has two parts: if either the verb or the noun phrase is meaningful then the other is meaningless and if both verbs are meaningful there are further absurd consequences.

1.1.1.1.2.2.1 If either the noun phrase or the verb is meaningful then the other is meaningless

> 3. How could it be tenable
> For going to be in that which is being gone over?

When there is no going, it is not tenable
To say that there is going there.

How could it be tenable that going that does not exist essentially is in that which is being gone over? It could not! The argument is as follows: If "when"—that is, because—the phrase "that which is being gone over" does not refer to the action that is the referent of the word "going." That is, it is not tenable to use the word "going." The phrase "that which is being gone over" already contains the meaning of "going." But there is only one action, and it would make no sense to say that the word "going" does not refer to going. In that case it would be possible that there was merely a place that is being gone over, but that it would not be tenable to say that there is going.

4. For whomever there is going where one goes,
The absurd consequence would follow that
There could be a path over which one is going without going;
But wherever one goes there is going.

Suppose one said that the term "going" refers only to the action of going. For any opponent according to whom the phrase "that which is being gone over" does not refer to an action of going, the meaning of "going" still depends on the meaning of that phrase. Such a position would be committed to the absurd consequence that the phrase "that which is being gone over" would not refer to the action of going. This is because [98] there is only one action and "that which is being gone over" must refer to the action indicated by the other, the word "going."

Now, suppose one argued as follows: Consider the following example. When we say that a woodcarver works with wood, there is only one action of working with wood. Nonetheless, even though working with wood is referred to by the word "woodcarver," it is also referred to by the phrase "working with wood." It is maintained that it is similar with respect to "going" and "that which is being gone over." So, how could it be the case that if either the noun phrase or the verb is meaningful, the other is meaningless?

If one maintains that agent and action are merely posited through the force of nominal convention, this all fits together. But if one maintains that the action of going exists through its own characteristic, this is impossible. Just as in general, a single action of moving the foot depends on both the person and the path over which he is going, we say "that action is the referent of both 'going' and of 'that which is being gone over.' " Therefore, there is no inconsistency between saying that and there being only one action. However, with respect to a path and goer which existed distinctly through their own characteristics, it would be inconsistent for these two things to depend in common on a single entity, because, as it is said,

> It makes no sense for any things that are distinct through their own characteristics
> To belong to the same continuum. [*Madhyamakāvatāra,* VI:61 cd]

Thus the action of moving the foot is the referent of both the phrases "that which is being gone over" and "going." Therefore, since it would contradictory for the action of going to be the referent of both terms and there to be only a single action of going, it is said that if either term was meaningful, the other would be meaningless.

1.1.1.1.2.2.2 If both are meaningful there are further absurd consequences

Suppose someone said that the action of going is the referent of both phrases "where one goes" and "going."

> 5. If going were where one goes,
> There would be a twofold going:
> One by he who goes there,
> And one in the going that is there.

If the action of going were the referent of both the phrases "where one goes" and "going," the absurd consequence would follow that there would be a twofold action of going, because the first one would be the action of going in virtue of which that interval of the path is called "where one goes," **[99]** and the second action of going would be that in virtue of which the person goes in that interval of the path.

> 6. Since it would follow that there would be a twofold going,
> The goer would be twofold.
> For without a goer,
> It is not tenable that anything goes.

There would be two actions of going, but what is the problem? If the consequence of a twofold action followed, the problem would be that it would also follow that there would be a twofold person as the goer. The reason for this is that without the goer as a basis, it would not be tenable for there to be the action of going, which must be based upon it. This is because the action depends upon that which accomplishes it, either object or agent. This action of going is associated with the agent. Here, the reason that a twofold agent follows from there being two actions of going is as follows: When Lhejin puts his right foot down, there would have to be two simultaneous actions of putting the foot down, one depending on the agent, and one depending on the path, for the reasons explained earlier. In that case, he would have to have two right

feet, and we could say the same about lifting his left foot! And if so, when one Lhejin with two feet goes, there would have to be two Lhejins! Since that is not the case, there are not two actions. Therefore it is not tenable to say that there is inherently existent going where one goes.

Suppose someone thought as follows: When a single Lhejin speaks and sees while sitting, we see a single agent performing many actions. So it is not contradictory for a single goer to have two actions of going. In response to this, *Prasannapadā* says:

> It is not like that, because while the capacity is the agent, the substance is not. Because there are different actions, there are different capacities relevant to accomplishing them. That is, in virtue of performing the action of sitting, one does not become a speaker. [32b]

This means that the reason that this and the previous case are not similar is that the previous action had either a substance **[100]** or a person as its agent. Two simultaneous actions of putting down the right foot are impossible for one person with two feet; therefore, in such a case there would have to be two persons. In the latter case, the capacities of such things as the tongue are the agents for each of the distinct simultaneous actions such as speaking. Therefore, although there are many capacities as agents at the same time, there is no need to have many persons at the same time.

Suppose one replied that even though this is the case, since the substance or person is identical, these many actions are performed by one agent. We reply that just as many actions are performed, such as speaking, there are many capacities as agents. Therefore, from this perspective, it is not the case that there are many actions performed by a single agent. Although a single substance or person as an agent may perform many actions, here this person is not the agent. Therefore, just on that ground it does not follow that a single agent performs many actions. Moreover, it is also explained that since it never happens that a single agent performs an action twice, such as placing the right foot down twice simultaneously, a single goer does not go twice.

According to some other commentator[9] since on the previous interpretation it is not possible to refute a single substantial person performing two actions of going, the latter interpretation is preferable. But such a claim is made without understanding why, if one accepts two actions of going, one would have to accept two goers, or why the substance is not the agent but the capacities are. So they disagree with the position of the great charioteers.

Thus, "Where one has gone . . ." [II: 1] refutes the existence of any action of going on the path that is the locus of going.

9. Byang chub brtson 'grus, *rTsa shes 'grel pa 'thad pa'i rgyan*, 42a (manuscript available in Sarnath).

1.1.1.2 Refutation through the examination of the agent

This section has three parts: the refutation of the goer existing as the basis of going, the general refutation of going in terms of the three kinds of person, and particular refutations of the goer going.

1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of the goer existing as the basis of going

Suppose someone argued as follows: **[101]** Although it is not tenable that the action of going is in the path over which one goes, since one says, "Lhejin goes," the action of going must be observed in Lhejin. Therefore, going exists inherently, because its basis, the goer, exists.

> 7. If without a goer,
> It is not tenable that there is going,
> Then if there were no going,
> How could there be a goer?

If there were no goer—that is, if it were eliminated—it would not be tenable that there is going, for the reasons previously explained in the context of "For without a goer . . ." [6c]. In that case, what is that going based on a goer? The answer is as follows:

It is not said with respect to the goer that the action in which the goer engages is a different entity from the goer; rather, it is said that that going exists in virtue of being that which makes the goer so-called. Since on analysis, the going does not exist as a different entity from the goer, how could there be a goer having an action of going with its own characteristic? There could not be! The refutation goes as follows: If the action of going existed inherently, one would have to be able to find it as a different entity from the goer. In that case, one could refute its dependence on the goer. Then there could be going without a goer. Since that has been refuted earlier, because there is no going based upon it, there is no goer as a basis. Thus the goer is refuted as the basis of action.

1.1.1.2.2 General refutation of going in terms of the three kinds of person

Suppose someone argued as follows: Going exists inherently, because in virtue of that it can be said that the person who has this property goes. If there were

no going, it could not be said that in virtue of having that property, Lhejin goes, just as if there were no stick, one could not say that someone has a stick.[10]

8. Now, inasmuch as a goer does not go,
And a non-goer does not go,
Apart from a goer and a non-goer
What third thing could go?

If the referent of the word "going" existed inherently, you cannot escape three alternatives. That which is a goer does not go, as will be explained. "Now" shows that after first refuting the goer going, the others are refuted in order. The non-goer also does not go because he is devoid of the action of going. **[102]** What third alternative—that which is neither a goer nor a non-goer—could go? None could, because such a thing is impossible.

1.1.1.2.3 Particular refutations of the goer going

One might think that even though neither that which is not a goer, nor that which is neither a goer nor not a goer goes, a goer still goes.

9. Now, when without going,
It is untenable to call something a goer,
How could it be tenable
To say that a goer goes?

When a single Lhejin goes, there is only a single action of going, and that is the referent of the word "goes." Without the action of going as the referent of that term, it would be untenable to call him a goer. In that case, how could it be tenable that the referent of the phrase "the goer goes" exists inherently? It could not be! Then if the verb phrase is meaningful, the subject phrase is meaningless.

Now suppose one said that the phrase "the goer" refers to the action of going.

10. For him according to whose position a goer goes,
The absurd consequence would follow that
There could be a goer who does not go;
Because it is maintained that that a goer goes.

10. The example trades on a fact about Sanskrit and Tibetan not reflected in English: The Sanskrit *daṇḍī* Tibetan *'khar ba can*, which mean *he who has a stick*, are single words, like "goer." So the applicability of a simple one-place predicate to the person depends on the existence of some thing clearly distinct from the person himself.

For that opponent whose position is that the referent of the phrase "the goer" is the action of going, the absurd consequence follows that the referent of the word "goes" is not the action of going, and so the goer would be the going. This is because there is only a single action of going, and in virtue of that being the referent of the phrase "the goer" it is asserted that the goer itself is the going. This shows that if the subject phrase is meaningful, the verb phrase would be meaningless.

Here also, as there is only a single action of going, if it existed through its own characteristic, and if it were the referent of one word, the other would have no referent, as was previously explained.

Now, suppose one said that both the phrases "the goer" and "goes" refer to the action of going.

> 11. If a goer were going,
> There would be the absurd consequence of a twofold going:
> One in virtue of which he is manifest as a goer,
> And one in virtue of which, having become a goer, he goes.

If the inherently existent action of going were the referent of both of the phrases in the sentence "the goer goes," the absurd consequence would follow that in each moment there would be two sets of actions of going, each comprising picking up and putting down the foot, because there would be two goings: the going of the goer which is manifest as—that is, called—a goer in virtue of the action of going, **[103]** and the going which is the action that the goer—having become a goer—performs. And if one maintained that, the goer would have to be twofold as was explained earlier.

Now, suppose one said that although this is the case, since we say conventionally that Lhejin goes, there is going. Although there is such a convention, when one analyzes to determine whether or not he is a goer, and in what context, we have already shown that neither is tenable. Therefore, this would be pointless. Thus, the verses "Now, when without going . . ." [II:9] refute the inherent existence of the goer who goes referred to by the phrase "he goes."

1.1.1.3 Refutation through the examination of activity

This section has five parts: the refutation of initial beginning, the refutation of the path on which one goes, the refutation of the opposite of going, the refutation of stopping at the end of going, and the refutation of the argument for staying.

1.1.1.3.1 Refutation of initial beginning

Suppose one said that going exists inherently because Lhejin begins to go having giving up sitting.

> 12. Going does not begin where one has already gone;
> Nor does going begin where one has not yet gone;
> Nor does it begin where one is going.
> Where, then, does going begin?

Even though that is the case, since there are only three possible ways it could exist, there is no beginning of going for one who has finished going—that is, where he has already gone—because his action of going has ceased. Nor is there any beginning of going where one has not yet gone—that is, for one who has not yet performed the action of going—because the future and the present are mutually exclusive. Nor is there a beginning of going in that which is being gone over—that is, for one who is performing the action of going—because apart from where one has gone and where one has not yet gone, which are, respectively, the past and the future, there is no inherently existent place where one goes. Not only that, but if there were an action of going, since this action would have to be twofold, the goer would have to be twofold.

Since this is the case, and since the beginning of going is never found, it says, "Where then does going begin?" These are the arguments that demonstrate the untenability of the beginning of going even though the path is taken to exist.

Now, the path where the beginning of going occurs is to be refuted.

> 13. Prior to the beginning of going,
> There is a beginning of going neither
> Where one is going nor where one has gone.
> How could there be going where one has not yet gone?

Prior to the beginning of the action of going **[104]**, Lhejin, having been sitting, begins going neither on the path where he is going nor where he has gone, because there is no beginning of going in these two. Suppose one said that although at that time these two do not exist, he will begin to go in that over which he has yet to go. But since that over which he has yet to go is where he has not begun the action of going, how could there be the beginning of action there? There could not!

1.1.1.3.2 Refutation of the path on which one goes

Now suppose one said that although there is no beginning of going in any of the three intervals of the path, there are three intervals of the path. It would not be possible for them to exist without any going.

> 14. Since the beginning of going
> Cannot be perceived in any way,
> What over which one has gone, what over which one is going,
> And what over which one has yet to go, can be conceived?

If there were a beginning of going, then it could be conceived that the beginning of going is where the action of going has ceased—that is, in what one has gone over or in that where it is currently occurring—that is, in that over which one is going, or in that where it has not yet arisen—that is, that over which one has yet to go. However, upon thorough analysis, it cannot be perceived in any way—that is, it cannot be seen. Therefore, one should inquire analytically into what that which has been gone over, that over which one is going, and that over which one is yet to go each are. Since they do not exist in any way, why erroneously conceive of the three temporal periods? Therefore, the ground for positing them—that is going—does not exist essentially.

1.1.1.3.3 Refutation of the opposite of going

Now, suppose one argued as follows: Whatever thing whose opposite exists, exists as well, such as light and dark, here and there, doubt and certainty. Since staying—the opposite of going—exists, going exists as well.

> 15. The goer does not stand.
> The non-goer does not stand.
> Apart from the goer and the non-goer,
> What third thing stands?

If staying existed inherently, going would exist inherently as well. But it does not. If it existed, it would have to exist in one of three ways. The goer does not stand, as will be explained later. Nor does a non-goer stand, because if Lhejin, who is a non-goer, were to stand, then what would the point be in another standing? If that activity existed through its own characteristic, then the error would ensue that having achieved the status of being a stander, one would have to stand once again. **[105]** "Apart from the goer and the non-goer, what third thing stands?" There is none, because such a thing is impossible.

Now, suppose one said that although neither a non-goer nor something different from the goer and non-goer stands, the goer himself stands.

16. When without going
It is not tenable that something is a goer,
How could it be tenable
That a goer stands?

How could it be tenable to say that a goer stands? It could not, because when—that is, since—without the activity of going as the referent of a word, it is not tenable to call something a goer, and to say that something stands is to say that it does not have the activity of going, which is the opposite of standing.

1.1.1.3.4 Refutation of stopping at the end of going

Suppose one argued as follows: Going exists inherently because there is halting from going, since when one halts from going, one begins staying.

17. One does not halt[11] where one is going;
Nor where one has gone; nor where one has not yet gone.

If halting existed inherently, there would be only three alternatives with respect to its site. One does not halt where one is going, because since where one is going is not seen to exist essentially and when the mere place where one is going exists, as it has been explained earlier, action is not tenable. One does not halt from going in the path over which one has already gone because there is no action of going there. Nor does one halt in the path over which one has not yet gone because there is no action of going there either. Therefore, halting from going does not exist inherently. While halting from going in the other two intervals of the path does not even exist conventionally, halting from going where one is going does not exist ultimately.

1.1.1.3.5 Refutation of the argument for staying

Now suppose one argued as follows: Since without staying—the opposite of going—there is no going, in order to establish going, staying must be established. This is because by establishing the latter we can establish the former. Therefore, staying exists inherently because its opposite exists, and the opposite is going.

11. The sDe dge editions of the root text and of *Prasannapadā* [35a] read *ldog pa* (to halt) here, but the sDe dge editions of the *Buddhapālita* [172a] and of *Prajñāpradīpa* [69b]read *sdod pa* (to sit). The Sanskrit edition of the root text in *Prasannapadā* reads *tiṣṭhati* (stands), but the commentary reads *nivartate*, corroborating *ldog pa*. These differences may reflect different translation choices by Tibetan translators or different recensions of the Sanskrit text.

17cd. Going and starting
And halting are similar.

Just as "the goer does not stay . . ." [II: 15–16] refutes the presentation of staying as a proof of the existence of going, **[106]** rearranging those two verses to say "The stayer does not go" would refute presenting going as a proof of the existence of staying.

Now suppose one said that having relinquished going, staying begins and therefore that staying exists. Just as "there is no beginning of going where one has gone" [II: 12] refutes the beginning of going, rearranging these three verses to say "there is beginning of staying where one has stayed" would refute the beginning—that is, the start—of staying.

Now suppose one thought that when Lhejin, having stayed for a while, stops staying, he begins going, and therefore that since he stops staying, staying exists. Just as "one does not halt where one is going" refutes stopping from going, one could rearrange these two lines to say "one does not stop staying" to refute stopping staying. Therefore, since staying does not exist inherently, how could going?

1.1.1.4 Refutation through the examination of activity

This section has two parts: the refutation through examination of whether the goer and going are identical or different and the refutation through examination of whether or not positing activity in the goer involves two actions.

1.1.1.4.1 Refutation through examination of whether the goer and going are identical or different

Suppose one argued as follows: Although one cannot say that that starting, halting, and going are in the three intervals of the path, or in that which is or is not a goer, or in anything other than these two, Lhejin is seen walking. Therefore, since he is called a goer, the goer and the action of going exist essentially.

18. That going just is the goer
Makes no sense.
Nor does it make sense that
They are completely different.

If walking Lhejin's action of going by taking steps and Lhejin the walker both existed essentially then they would have to be either essentially identical or essentially different. But it makes no sense that that action of going **[107]**

and that goer are essentially identical, nor does it make sense that that action of going and that goer are essentially different.

"So," one might ask, "why does it not make sense?"

19. If the goer were identical with going
The absurd consequence would follow
That agent and action
Are identical.

If the action of going and the goer were essentially identical, then the absurd consequence would follow that agent and action—that is the act—are identical. Then it would follow that you could not draw a distinction by saying "this is the action" and "that is the agent." However, the action of cutting and the cutter are not identical. Therefore, by modus tollens, these two are not essentially identical.

20. If going and the goer were thought of as completely different,
The absurd consequence would follow
That there could be going without a goer
And a goer without going.

Suppose, on the other hand, one thought that the action of going and the goer were inherently different. In that case, one would see an action of going that did not depend on a goer, and a goer that did not depend upon an action of going. But since this is not observed, it follows by modus tollens that these two are not essentially different. This argument demonstrates that if they existed distinctly through their own characteristics, they would be unconnected, and so it would not be tenable for them to be dependent upon one another, like a pot and a cloth.

Suppose someone argued as follows: Since action and agent cannot be established as different entities, as far as I am concerned, they are not different. But since they are the referents of different expressions, nor are they identical. Therefore they exist despite the fact that they are neither identical nor different!

21. When neither in identity
Nor in difference
Can they exist,
How can these two exist at all?

Action and agent are not a single entity—that is, have a single essence—nor are they two entities—that is, have two essences. So, how can they exist inherently? You explain it! Since they cannot, they are merely fabricated! If authoritative cognition eliminates their essential identity and essential difference, any third alternative with respect to their essential existence is banished from thought as well. So, one might wonder, how are they are grasped as existing essentially, although they do not exist in these two ways? **[108]** Here

is why one might think that: Taking "identity" to mean that there are not distinct referents for distinct names and "difference" to mean that things exist as unrelated objects, they think that although they do not exist in these two ways, they still exist essentially. But this doubt does not arise after authoritative cognition has eliminated their being essentially identical or essentially different. The Vatsiputrīyas assertion that the person is neither permanent nor impermanent can also be understood analogously.

1.1.1.4.2 Refutation through examination of whether or not positing activity in the goer involves two actions

Now, suppose someone argues as follows: In everyday life one says, "Lhejin, the goer, goes." When one says things such as "that speaker speaks" or "that agent acts," one means that because of being a speaker he utters words; and because of being a goer, he goes by that very going in virtue of which he is called a goer. Therefore there is no error in talking this way.

> 22. The going in virtue of which a goer is manifest[12]
> Cannot be the going in virtue of which he goes
> Because he does not exist before that going.
> So who goes and where does he go?

He who is clearly manifest as a goer in virtue of the action of going, being a goer, does not go, that is, he is not going—he is not performing the action of going. This is because if there were a goer prior to the activity of going, that goer would have to go on a path. In that case, just as Lhejin is seen going to a city or a town, which is a different entity from him, prior to the activity of going, and independent of it, there is no goer.

Since the very activity that determines that something is a goer is itself the instrument by means of which the goer goes, the necessity of the going and the goer being sequential arises in the system according to which the activity of going exists inherently, but not in that according to which it exists coventionally. Why is that? Consider, for instance, saying that a sprout arises. If the sprout which is to be arisen does not exist prior to its having arisen, its arising is not tenable; if it does, it does not need to arise again. Thus the existence of arising through its own characteristic is refuted. In the same way, **[109]** if Lhejin, who is to be characterized as a goer, did not exist in that way prior to the arising of the activity of going, it would be not be tenable for him to be

12. Here our translation reflects the Tibetan *mngnon*, on which Tsong khapa will comment, rather than the Skt *yathocyate*, which usually means *so-called*. This reading is also confirmed by the Sanskrit edition of Candrakīrti's commentary, which reads *yathocyate* to mean *manifest*. He glosses this term with *abhivyajyate (to say, or to manifest)*.

going; and if he did, then having achieved the status of a goer, there would be no need for him to go again. However if, even after having achieved the status of a goer, he has to go, he cannot go in virtue of the very activity that determines that he is a goer. Therefore, they must be sequential.

Both of the masters have explained this as we present it above. However, according to *Prajñāpradīpa* [74a], this would be redundant to the refutation of the goer's going in the context of "now, when there is not-going" [II: 9]. But because that is a refutation of the thesis that if the activity of going is the referent of the verb phrase then the phrase "the goer" is meaningless, there is a big difference between these.

Now, suppose one thought that one does not go by performing the action in virtue of which one is a goer. Rather, there is a second action in virtue of which one goes.

23. The going in virtue of which a goer is manifest
Cannot be different from the going in virtue of which he goes,
Since in one goer
A twofold going is untenable.

A second action, different from the action of going in virtue of which the goer is clearly manifest, is not the action that the goer performs, because it is not tenable that a single goer performs a twofold action of going.

Here also, as above, Bhāvaviveka charges Buddhapālita with being redundant: He also charges that since another action is not refuted, and since he maintains that there is only one action of going, the error is committed of asserting that the goer goes in virtue of performing that action [74b]. However, the first error is not committed. It is just as above. Since this merely presents the consequences unacceptable to the opponent—showing that problems follow from their being separate entities, and that a single goer would perform two actions of going—these errors are not committed.

Earlier commentators explain that both of these sections of the text refute the assertion that going is not an action; instead, they say, it is an object to be accomplished by a goer. But this is not tenable **[110]**, because it is absolutely clear that this is a refutation through examination of whether or not the very action in virtue of which something is called a goer is going. Such assertions as that the speaker utters words and that the woodcutter cuts wood are refuted similarly.

1.1.2 Refutation of the activity common to agent and action

24. That which is a goer
Does not go in any of the three ways.

That which is not a goer
Does not go in any of the three ways.

25\. One that both is and is not a goer
Does not go in any of the three ways.

That which is a goer and that which is not a goer have been already explained. That which is both a goer and a non-goer is maintained to be a goer in dependence on some of its aspects and to be a non-goer in dependence on other aspects. This is similar to the earlier explanation in the context of the discussion of something that is neither. Here, going is to go to where one is to go.

Buddhapālita explains that the three ways are to do so in that over which one has gone; that over which one is going; and that over which one has yet to go [174b]. Thus, he who is a goer does not perform going to where he has to go in any of the three intervals of the path: neither in that over which he has gone, nor in that over which he has yet to go, nor in that over which is going. And this can be applied to the other two cases. *Prasannapadā*, on the other hand, explains that the three ways are being that which is, that which is not, and that which both is and is not a goer [37a]. He says that the eighth chapter explains their nonperformance of going.

1.2 Drawing conclusions

25c. Therefore, going, goer
And that which is to be gone over are non-existent.

Therefore, upon analysis, neither the goer, nor where one is to go, nor going are found. Therefore none of these three—neither the goer, nor where one is to go, nor the going—exist essentially. Ordinary people are fixated on things due to conventions, including, primarily, varieties of actions. Among these actions, the action of going is most salient. Therefore, when its inherent existence is refuted, all of the remaining actions and agents can be understood similarly. That is why he has refuted the essence of coming and going. To go from this very place to the other is to come in relation to the one who is staying at that other place. Therefore, he does not present an argument refuting the essence of coming.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

[111] A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to refute the idea that the profound fact of the emptiness of essence of going and coming is established by mere sophistry

and to show that all of the scriptures that present the nonexistence of coming and going are explained by this chapter.

The *Lalitavistara-sūtra* says,

> Just as when there is a seed there is a sprout,
> Whatever is a seed is not a sprout.
> It is neither anything other than that nor that itself.
> It is neither permanent nor annihilated in reality. [*mDo sde* kha 89b]

This refutes both the seed itself passing into and going on to become the sprout and the sprout coming from something that is other than the seed. In the first case it would be permanent. But since that is not the case, that which exists, having not yet disintegrated at the time when the sprout exists, is not permanent. In the latter case, its having arisen without depending on the seed as a cause, the continuum of the seed would have been terminated. But since that is not the case either, the continuum of the seed is not terminated. It continues,

> Although the impression appears to have come from the seal,
> One does not see the seal itself pass into it.
> It is neither in that nor in anything other than that.
> Thus produced phenomena are neither permanent nor annihilated.
> [Ibid.]

When the actual contours of the seal are seen in that which is sealed, neither does that seal pass into it nor does it come from anything other than the seal. This example shows that no produced phenomena, when they arise, come from anywhere, and that when causes cease, they do not go anywhere. Thus they are said to be free from permanence and from annihilation.

The *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says,

> When they see a woman's ornamented face
> On the surface of a mirror or a pot of oil,
> Childish ones develop attachment to it;
> Then develop desire and pursue it avidly.
>
> The face does not pass on to them.
> Nor is the face ever found in the image.
> Just as that for which these fools develop desire,
> So all phenomena should be known. [*mDo sde* da 26a] **[112]**

This says that when the image of the face is reflected in the mirror, the face itself does not pass or go into it. Nor does the image come from anything other than the face. Taking this as an example, it should be understood according to the previous explanations. The refutation of coming and going in the text above is the refutation of going and coming by picking up and putting

down the foot. But that is merely an illustration: one should understand that the point of these arguments is to refute the coming and going of all produced phenomena. The following quotations from the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* are provided to illustrate this:

> The Victor who lacks all vices and who is endowed with the ten
> powers
> Has the taught the supreme meditative absorption.
> Beings in cyclic existence are like dreams.
> They are unborn and undying.
>
> Sentient beings, humans, and life are not found.
> These phenomena are like foam, plantain trees,
> Illusions, flashes of lightning,
> The moon in the water and mirages.
>
> No person who has died in this world
> Passes or goes to any other world. [*mDo sde* da 96a]

This says that sentient beings essentially coming from a previous life or going to a next life has been refuted, because when they are sought they are not found. When they are not found, one might think that that it is not possible for there to be any agent of action or experiencer of its effect, and therefore that there is no karma. In order to forestall this idea arising, this sūtra continues:

> Actions that have been performed are never wasted.
> When one transmigrates, both positive and negative effects ripen.
>
> They are neither permanent nor annihilated;
> There is neither accumulation of karma nor its endurance.
> But it is not that having performed them there is no contact.
> Nor will the effect of something done by someone else will be expe-
> rienced.
>
> Neither is anything transferred; nor is it returned.
> Neither does everything exist nor not exist.
> Thus engaging with of views is impure. [Ibid.]

[113] "Actions that have been performed" is explained by "When one transmigrates." Saying that they do not endure until ripening refutes their permanence. "But it is not" shows that they are not wasted, and thereby refutes nihilism. "Nor will the effect of" refutes encountering the effects of that which one has not done. "Nor is it returned" shows that after ripening has occurred there is no further effect. Since they do not exist essentially, but do exist conventionally, they are neither existent nor nonexistent. In life, to engage with extreme views regarding existence and nonexistence is impure—that is, not conducive to liberation. The *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* says,

"O worthy ones, where are you going and whence have you come?"

They replied, "Ven Subhūti, the Transcendent Lord has explained things as follows: nothing goes anywhere or comes from anywhere." [*dKon brtsegs* cha 148a]

So the arguments in this chapter are the eyes with which to see such sūtras that show that no phenomena or persons come or go. Therefore, after having first mastered these arguments, one should explain the meanings of all of these texts through that understanding.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

One should understand clearly the grasping by means of which one grasps the goer, the place where he goes, and the going not as posited as existing merely through the force of nominal convention, but as existing inherently. Having understood that, one should ascertain that when one searches to determine whether or not they exist in the way that they are grasped, their existence is undermined in various ways through the arguments explained above. The refutations through various analytic arguments are for the purpose of leading one to realize the untenability of the framework of action and agent in the context of inherent existence, **[114]** but not for the purpose of demonstrating the nonexistence of coming and going.

By understanding that, one should transform the mind which previously took all conventional things such as coming and going to exist inherently. One should then ascertain that agent and action is tenable only in the context of emptiness of inherent existence or essence. Thus, *Prasannapadā*, commenting on

Through action and agent
All remaining things should be understood. [VIII: 13cd]

says,

Having refuted the inherent existence of going and the goer, one should understand that they merely exist in mutual dependence. [64b]

This can be understood through the following rearrangement:[13]

The goer depends upon going.
Going depends on the goer as well.

13. A rearrangement of VIII: 12.

> Apart from depending arising
> One cannot see any cause for their existence.

First, one should ascertain the manner in which coarse manifest phenomena such as coming and going are essenceless. Thereafter one should ascertain how this applies to the case of a person coming from a previous life to this one and going to the next. With respect to the phenomena as well, one should practice by applying these arguments to that which, while arising, does not come from anywhere and which, while ceasing, does not go anywhere. One should also apply this in the same way to all cases of action and agent. Thereby one will develop profound analytic wisdom with regard to the way things really are, and all activities such as going, walking, sleeping, sitting, etc., will appear to be illusionlike.

This is the commentary on the second chapter, having twenty-five verses, called "the examination of coming and going."

CHAPTER III

Examination of the Senses

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Advancing the opponent's argument
  1.2 Its refutation
    1.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the three phenomena involved in seeing
      1.2.1.1 Refutation of the eye as the agent of seeing
        1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of the thesis that the eye is the agent of seeing
          1.2.1.1.1.1 Refutation using the premise that it does not see itself
            1.2.1.1.1.1.1 Advancing the argument
            1.2.1.1.1.1.2 Disposing of the charge that it commits the fallacy of accident
            1.2.1.1.1.1.3 Conclusion
          1.2.1.1.1.2 Refutation through examining whether or not the seer is related to the action of seeing
        1.2.1.1.2 Refutation of the thesis that the self or consciousness is the agent of seeing
      1.2.1.2 Refutation of the object and action of seeing
    1.2.2 Applying the argument to the others faculties
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We have now completed the brief explanation of the two selflessnesses **[114: 19]**. The second major portion of the text is the extensive explanation of the two selflessnesses. It comprises five sections: the distinct explanation of the

selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of the person, the presentation of the emptiness of essence of mere phenomena, **[115]** the mode of engaging with the selflessness of things as they really are, the presentation of the emptiness of essence of time, and the presentation of the emptiness of essence of the continuum of life. We now begin the first of these sections—the extensive explanation of the selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of the person—which has two parts: the explanation of the selflessness of phenomena and the explanation of the selflessness of the person. The first of these has two sections: the explanation that the three kinds of phenomena are selfless and the refutation of the argument that they have a self. The first of these sections has three parts: the refutation of the phenomenal self of the faculties, the refutation of the phenomenal self of the aggregates, and the refutation of the phenomenal self of the elements.

This chapter is the first of these three parts, and it itself has three parts: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

This section has two parts: advancing the opponent's argument and its refutation.

1.1 Advancing the opponent's argument

> 1. Seeing, hearing, smelling,
> Tasting, touching, and mind
> Are the six faculties.
> Their spheres are the visible objects, etc.

Now, according to some of our schools, even if such things as going do not exist, such things as the seer have to be affirmed, since they are found in the scriptures. In the *Abhidharma,* seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and introspection are presented as the six, in that order, from the visual sense to the introspective sense. Their six spheres are presented in that order from the object of sight and those indicated by the "etc.": from the object of hearing, the object of smell, the object of taste, and the object of touch to the object of introspection, *viz.,* form, sound, etc. To the extent that something sees form it is called "seeing"; and the others are also presented insofar as they grasp their respective objects. Although when he says "seeing" and mentioning each the number is understood, nevertheless, "six" is stated explicitly in order to emphasize that, even conventionally, there is no agent other than these by means

of which to observe form such things as form. **[116]** These schools also maintain that if nothing exists essentially, such things as seeing would not be possible, and therefore that such things as seeing *do* exist essentially.

1.2 Its refutation

This section has two parts: refutation of the essential existence of the three phenomena involved in seeing and applying this argument to the other faculties.

1.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the three phenomena involved in seeing

This part has two sections: the refutation of the eye as the agent of seeing and the refutation of the object and action of seeing.

1.2.1.1 Refutation of the eye as the agent of seeing

This section has two parts: the refutation of the thesis that the eye is the agent of seeing and the refutation of the thesis that the self or consciousness is the agent of seeing.

1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of the thesis that the eye is the agent of seeing

This section has two parts: the refutation using the premise that it does not see itself; and the refutation through examining whether or not the seer is or is not related to the action of seeing.

1.2.1.1.1.1 Refutation using the premise that it does not see itself

This section has three parts: advancing the argument, disposing of the charge that it commits the fallacy of accident, and the conclusion.

1.2.1.1.1.1.1 Advancing the argument

2. That very seeing does not see
   Itself at all.

How can something that cannot see itself
See another?

In the commentary on the eighth chapter the inherent existence of the visual object and visual subject is rejected and it is explained that they exist interdependently. So, the object of negation is the *inherent* existence of the seer, etc., but not their *mere* existence. The eye that sees form "does not see itself at all," because, since it would be its own visual object, this would be an instance of the inconsistency of reflexive action. And then how can something that cannot see itself see others such as blueness? So, there is no inherently existent seeing and the same applies to the ear, etc.

This is an argument showing that if seeing existed inherently its dependence on causes would be contradictory. Therefore, since they are comparable in that they do not perceive themselves, one should not distinguish between them by saying that the eye sees form and ear does not. This is because for either of them, as unrelated things, it makes just as much sense to perceive as not to perceive.

According to the *Buddhapālita,* the refutation goes as follows: while moisture is found with water, heat with fire, and fragrance with jasmine, when these are conjoined with them, such things as humidity are observed in such things as soil, water, and cloth. **[117]** Similarly, if seeing existed inherently, first the eye would be observed, and form would only be observed thereafter. But since this is not found to be the case, vision could not see even form.[1] [175a]. Buddhapālita then quotes the *Catuḥśataka*:

If the natures of all things
First appear in themselves,
Then why then do we not find
That the eye is perceived by the eye itself? [XIII: 16]

Buddhapālita's argument is the same as Āryadeva's.

1.2.1.1.1.1.2 Disposing of the charge that it commits the fallacy of accident

3. The example of fire
Cannot elucidate seeing.
That, along with seeing has been dealt with
Through the analysis of the gone, the not-gone, and the going.

1. Buddhapālita's discussion is more extensive. Tsong khapa presents only a summary.

Suppose one thought "Just as, even though the fire does not burn itself, it burns others, it is not contradictory to say that even though seeing does not see itself its seeing others exists essentially." It is not possible to prove the inherent existence of seeing by supplying the example of fire. The analogy of fire, "along with"—that is, together with—the actual object, seeing, has been "dealt with"—that is, refuted earlier. How? Just as going is rejected in each of these three by "The gone, not-gone and going," it should be understood that the burned is not burned and the seen is not seen, etc. and "the burner does not burn" and "the seer does not see" should be understood similarly.[2] Thus this establishes that that which does not see itself does not see another inherently.

1.2.1.1.1.1.3 Conclusion

> 4. When there is not the slightest seeing,
> There is no seer.
> How could it makes sense to say
> That in virtue of seeing, it sees?

Since it does not see itself or another even the least bit, it makes no sense for that which does not see to be seeing. Therefore, how could it make sense to say that just because the eye sees form, the eye is the agent of seeing?

1.2.1.1.1.2 Refutation through examining whether or not the seer is related to the action of seeing

> 5. Seeing does *not* see.
> Nonseeing does *not* see.

Moreover, here it is said that the eye—since the eye sees just in virtue of seeing form—is *therefore* the agent of seeing. Given this, since the agent eye has to be related to the action of seeing, it must be analytically determined whether the eye is related to the action in virtue of having the nature of seeing or in virtue of lacking the nature of seeing.

In the first case, **[118]** an eye whose nature is seeing cannot be related once again to the action denoted by "since it sees"; it would have to perform two actions of seeing, and consequently there would be two agents of action. In the second case, the eye whose nature is not seeing does not see form, since

2. See II:8.

it is devoid of the action of seeing, just like the tip of a finger. Since neither one having nor one lacking the nature of seeing can see form, the phrase

How could it makes sense to say
That in virtue of seeing, it sees? [4cd]

must be applied here.

Candrakīrti construes the four lines beginning "When there is not" as the conclusion of the earlier refutation [39a]. However, Buddhapālita explains them in this way: Moreover, your statement: "just in virtue of seeing form, it sees" has an active verbal affix indicating that the eye is the agent;[3] thus since it sees, there is seeing.[4] Therefore, when an object is seen, there is seeing; but when it is not, there is not.

Since when an object is seen there is seeing, and when it is not seen even the least bit there is no seeing, how could it make sense to say that in virtue of seeing, the eye sees? The word "sees" refers to the action of seeing, but "in virtue of seeing" does not refer to a second action. Even though there is no second action, one might think that there is, in which case there would have to be two agents and two actions. If, with the intention of rebutting this error, anyone maintained that the word "sees" refers to an action of seeing, but the earlier occurrence of the word does not, then the phrase "in virtue of seeing, it sees" would not make sense, because the word "sees" would not refer to the action of seeing. If instead, in order to rebut this, it is maintained that "seeing" itself refers to the action of seeing, then again, since "sees" would not refer to an action, it would make no sense for **[119]** that which does not see—which is devoid of the action of seeing—to be seeing. Thus Buddhapālita comments, combining all six lines into a single argument [176a–176b].[5]

Here, the reason why there can not be a single action of seeing as the referent of these two words in "In virtue of seeing form, it sees"[6] is as follows: the action to which the word "sees" refers is associated with the eye, and the action to which the phrase "In virtue of seeing form" refers is associated with the object as well. It should, therefore, be noted that if these two existed through their own characteristics, they could exist distinctly through their own char-

3. This is a point about Sanskrit, not Tibetan grammar.

4. There is an important difference between the quotation as Tsong khapa has it and the original as it is found in extant Tibetan translations: Tsong khapa's text reads, *khyod kyis gzugs la lta bar byed pas lta ba'o zhes smras pa ni byed pa po* **mig** *la bya ba'i rkyen brjod nas lta bar byed pas lta ba yin no/* whereas the *Buddhapālitī* [177b] reads, *khyod kyis gzugs la lta bar byed pas lta ba'o zhes smras pa ni byed pa po la bya bya'i rkyen brjod nas lta bar byed pas lta ba yin no/.* Tsong khapa supplies the eye as the subject of seeing, whereas Buddhapālita says that the affix is added to indicate an agent, but does not specify that the agent is the *eye,* as opposed to *seeing,* which is the agent in the verse on which he is commenting.

5. While much of this is direct quotation from the *Buddhapālitī,* some is paraphrased. There are also a few deletions, insertions, and glosses.

6. See the commentary on III: 5ab for a parallel construction to which this phrase refers. Tsong khapa clearly intends the eye as the subject of this sentence.

acteristics as the referents of individual words, and, as was said earlier, it would then be contradictory for them both to be associated with a single action.

Some Buddhist schools maintain that a phenomenon that is merely arising is without action. Therefore, they argue, no one characterized by action sees an object even the least bit, because there *is* no action. Therefore, they think that to prove that the eye characterized by action, and which has the nature of seeing, does not see an object is to prove that which has already been proven. But without action—which is part of convention—there would be no *mere phenomena*, since they would be devoid of action, like a sky flower. Thus, if it is a matter of whether or not it exists conventionally, they should accept action, just as they accept mere phenomena. However, if this is an enquiry into whether or not it exists as things really are, then mere phenomena also do not exist, just as action is not acceptable.[7] It is said in the *Catuḥśataka*:

> That which is active is not permanent.
> The omnipresent is without action.
> That which is without action is as though it is nonexistent.
> Why do you not prefer selflessness? [X: 17]

Thus it is explained in *Prasannapadā* [39b] that this other system does not undermine the mādhyamikas, and that we do not commit the error of proving that which has already been proven.

In this context the assertion that "there is no action" does not mean that there is no action such as seeing form and Lhejin's going, etc. Instead, they assert that apart from mere phenomena, such as form and Lhejin, **[120]** there is no seeing or going. In our own system, there is no distinction between these two, as they are equally nonexistent ultimately, and equally conventionally existent.

Others assert that the word "therefore"[8] shows that action exists conventionally, as a premise for the claim that although it is maintained that an eye characterized by action does not see form, this is not to commit the error of proving that which has already been proven. Nevertheless, to take the thesis that is the consequence of his assertion as his intention makes absolutely no sense. Since they do not provide as a reason the assertion that we merely refute the object of negation but do not prove a thesis, it is not the case that the point of the previous refutation was not established. Therefore, to say that it is sufficient that the premises and example are accepted by others is to say that they must be established by their authoritative cognition, but not to say that they merely assert them.

7. Much of the preceding discussion is a close paraphrase and partial quotation of *Prasannapadā* [39a–39b]

8. The "therefore" to which Tsong khapa refers occurs in *Prasannapadā* [39b] in the sentence *De'i phyir gal te tha snyad kyi bden pa yin na ni chos tsam po bzhin du bya ba yang khas long la/ 'on te de kho na nyid sems na ni bya bzhin du chos tsam po yang yod pa ma yin no zhes khas blang bar bya'o/* Therefore, in the context of conventional truth action should be accepted as existing just as mere phenomena do; but from the perspective of the way things really are, mere phenomena should be accepted as existing just as action does.

1.2.1.1.2 Refutation of the thesis that the self or consciousness is the agent of seeing

> 5cd. Through seeing itself
> The analysis of the seer is understood.

We do not accept that the fact that the words "it sees" are in the phrase "in virtue of seeing it sees" [4d] proves that the eye is the agent of seeing. Then what is the point? Saying "since it sees by means of this, it sees" [*Prasannapadā* 39b] establishes that the eye is the instrument of seeing. Thus, there is no error in pursuing an analysis to determine whether or not the eye is related to seeing and accepting it as the agent. That which sees by means of this instrument—seeing, *viz.,* the eye[9]—is the agent. And this is either consciousness according to our schools, or the self according to other schools. Since this *does* exist, when the agent of seeing is established, seeing is also thereby established.

Just as in a previous example the axe is taken as the cutter in the context of the question, "Who cuts this log?" when someone responds, "The axe cuts it"[10] the eye is taken as the seer in the context of the question, "Who sees form?" when someone responds, "The eye sees." Here, just as in "Lhejin cuts the log with the axe," Lhejin is taken as the agent and **[121]** the axe is taken as the instrument, when it is said "either the self or consciousness sees form with the eye," either the self or consciousness is taken as the agent and the eye is taken as the instrument.

Earlier, at the time of the refutation of the assertion that the eye sees, "That very seeing does not see" [III: 2a] rebutted it. Similarly, it should be noted that the two seers should be explained, or more properly, refuted by the same reasoning. Thus we can rearrange the text:

> The seer does not see itself
> Through seeing.
> How can something that cannot see itself
> See another?[11]

Here, it is shown that only the self or consciousness is posited as the seer, replacing the eye as seer, and thus the refutation is similarly applicable. Further, there would be another error—the absurdity of having three seeings if a seer sees.

9. This argument comes from *Prasannapadā* [39b], but the reference to the eye is again inserted by Tsong khapa and is not mentioned as an instrument by Candrakīrti.

10. This use of "the axe" as a response to a "who" question is just as strange in Tibetan as it is in English. The axe is, however, a secondary agent in Tibetan grammar.

11. This is a play on III: 2. These "rearrangements," or compositions of variant verses using original verses as templates, is a common device in both Indian and Tibetan commentarial literature.

Now, suppose someone argued as follows: the seer exists essentially because its object, material form, and its action, seeing, exist.

> 6. Without detachment from vision there is no seer.
> Nor is there a seer detached from it.

How could the seer exist essentially when neither of them exists essentially? If the seer existed essentially one could not escape the two alternatives: Even if the seer were posited without detachment, that is to say, in dependence on seeing, it would not exist essentially because it would exist either in dependence as an existent, or in dependence as a nonexistent.

The first case makes no sense, because that which is already existent does not need to arise again; therefore, it does not make any sense for it to be dependent. This is also a refutation of the possibility that a thing existing through its own characteristic is dependent, showing that that would commit the error—which has been explained earlier—of requiring the arising of one that has already arisen.

In the second case, it is contradictory for it to be dependent, just like the horn of rabbit. Suppose someone says that it is detached, that is, that the seer exists as a seer without depending on seeing. The "nor" indicates that not only is there no seer dependent on seeing, but also there is no seer independent of seeing, **[122]** because it is not dependent on another, just like a sky flower. However, Buddhapālita refutes this saying that if the seer performs the action of seeing, then there would be two actions but that there *cannot* be; and if it does not, then it would be devoid of action. Thus he explains that this verse has a meaning similar to that of "Seeing does *not* see" [III: 5a] [176b–177a].

1.2.1.2 Refutation of the object and action of seeing

> 6cd. Without a seer
> How can there be seeing or the seen?

Since there is no seer existing essentially, either dependent on or independent of seeing, how can the seen and seeing exist—since they do not exist essentially—without a cause, the seer? Therefore, how can the seer be established as existing essentially on the ground of their existence?

> 7. From the nonexistence of seeing and the seen it follows that
> The four—consciousness, etc.—do not exist.
> Since this is the case, how could such things as
> The appropriator exist?

Here, one might propose that the seen and seeing do exist because their effects exist. Depending on seeing and the seen, consciousness arises; com-

bining these three, contaminated contact arises; that which arises with contact is feeling, and because of that craving arises.

We note here that the verse "Just as the birth of a son"[12] is not found in the other three commentaries[13] and this commentary[14] also does not comment on it. And also it is not consistent with Avalokitavata's statement that *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* contains 449 verses. Therefore, it appears that it was translated from a corrupted version.

If the four—consciousness, etc.—did exist essentially, the two could also exist essentially. But that is not the case. Since the seer does not exist essentially, neither do the two—the seen and seeing—exist essentially. Consequently, the four—consciousness and those indicated by "etc.," *viz.,* contact, feeling, and craving—do not exist essentially.

Here one might argue further that since such things are said in sūtra as, "Grasping arises through being caused by craving," consciousness, etc, exist, because grasping, becoming, rebirth, aging, death, and so forth arise **[123]** from them. But since the seen and seeing do not exist essentially, consciousness, etc., do not exist essentially. Therefore, how could the appropriator, and the others that are indicated by "such things as"—such things as becoming, rebirth, and aging—exist essentially? It is not possible.

1.2.2 Applying the argument to the other faculties

Suppose one argued as follows: You have refuted seeing; however, hearing and so forth are not refuted. Therefore, since they exist, things exist essentially.

> 8. Through the explanation of seeing,
> Hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and mind,
> Hearer and sound, etc.,
> Should also be understood.

Hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and introspection; the hearer and sound; and those indicated by "etc.,"—*viz.,* the smeller and smell; the taster

12. The controversial verse to which Tsong khapa refers reads as follows:

> Just as the birth of a son is said to occur
> In dependence on the father and mother,
> So consciousness is said to arise
> In dependence on the eye and material form.

13. This allegedly spurious verse is found neither in the *Buddhapālita,* nor in *Prajñāpradīpa,* nor in Avalokitavrata's commentary.

14. This statement is curious, as extant Tibetan translations of *Prasannapadā,* as well as the Sanskrit edition of *Prasannapadā* in fact *do* have this verse and indeed comment on it [40a–40b], though the extant Tibetan translations of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* do not contain it. In fact, *Prasannapadā* seems to be the principal source for this verse.

and taste; the toucher and the tangible; and the thinker and thought—should be understood to have been explained. How have they been explained? Just by "seeing." Just as seeing is refuted, hearing and the other five should be understood; just as the seer is refuted, the hearer and the others should be understood; and just as the seen is refuted, sound and the other five should be understood. Thus we could rearrange the text:

> That very hearing does not hear
> Itself at all.

Likewise, smelling does not smell itself, tasting does not taste itself, touching does not touch itself, and thinking does not introspect itself.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to rebut the idea that the refutation of the thesis that the three sets of six agents, objects, and actions exist inherently is merely an enterprise of sophists and to demonstrate that all the scriptures—which refute the claim that eye sees form, etc.—are explained by this chapter. The Transcendent Lord has said,

> The exalted hearers analytically determine that the material form apprehended by the eye **[124]** in the past, present, and future is without any of these: permanence, stability, reality, immutable reality, and nonerroneous reality. Nonetheless the illusion exists. That which is created as an illusion exists. That which creates mental obscuration exists. How else could it be?[15]

The other five should be understood in the same way. According to the *Bhava-saṃkrānti-sūtra*,

> Since the eye does not see material form
> And the mind does not know phenomena,
> Where there is no mundane engagement
> There is the supreme truth, [*mDo sde* dza 176b]

and

> When the conditions are assembled there is seeing,
> As the teacher has explained.

15. This quotation comes from the *Buddhapālita* [177b]. The sūtra reference has not been located.

To grasp this ground as ultimate
Is to fabricate [Ibid.]

According to this, the six from the eye to the mind, the action of grasping of the object, the object, and the agent are empty of essence. Where there is no mundane engagement, this is the ultimate truth. An alternate translation reads, "This is the ultimate truth."[16]

This all shows that to grasp the demonstrated ground—that agents grasp their respective objects through the power of the assembly of the conditions **[125]**, *viz.*, the sense faculties and their objects—as truly existent is fabrication.

Similarly, in *Lalitavistara-sūtra*, it says,

Depending on eye and material form
The visual consciousness arises here.
However, material form does not depend upon the eye.
Material form does not enter the eye.

These phenomena are selfless and without beauty
Nonetheless, people imagine them to have both self and beauty.
They erroneously imagine them to have that which they lack.
From this arises the visual consciousness.

Through the cessation and arising of consciousness, respectively,
The elimination of consciousness and its development are observed.
Yogis see nothing as coming and going;
Rather as empty and illusionlike.[17] [*mDo sde* kha 89b]

[125] This means that although consciousness depends on the sense faculties and objects, the sense faculties and objects do not replace each other; and arising and ceasing neither come from anywhere nor go anywhere, and should be seen as illusionlike.

It is said in *Upālipariprcchā-sūtra,*

The eye sees when everything is assembled.
The material forms that are seen by the eye
Are not seen at night in the absence of the conditions.
Therefore, assembly and disassembly are conceptual. [*dKon brtsegs* ca 129a]

This shows that the agent sees depending on the assemblage of the conditions and does not see when they are not assembled. Therefore, seeing and

16. This refers to the final line of the first of these two verses.

17. Tsong khapa may have contracted and re-metered the original, or he may have taken this from another recension of this sūtra. In sDe dge the meter is different.

not seeing the object are merely conceptually posited, but they do not exist inherently.

> The eye, depending on light, sees various material forms,
> Pleasant and unpleasant.
> It sees in assemblage with these.
> Therefore, the eye never sees. [Ibid.]

Since the eye sees depending on the assemblage of conditions, the eye never sees material form inherently. Thus both this and the previous verse refute essence by reasoning from dependent origination.

> Whatever pleasant sound occurs
> Never penetrates inside;
> Nor is the (ear) seen going towards it.
> Sound appears only out of conceptual thought. [Ibid.]

Neither does the object come to the sense faculty, nor does the sense faculty go to the object. Instead, the experience of the object by the sense faculty is shown to be merely conceptually posited.

> The sound of song, music and dance are not to be grasped.
> Dreamlike objects are causes of desire for unwise fools.
> The unwise who are obsessed and conceptualize ruin themselves.
> Am I going to be like the childish beings, who are slaves of afflictive emotions? [*Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā-sūtra, dKon brtsegs* nga 248a]

This shows that when one sees that one's own mind is bound by grasping representations—that it is grasping true existence—**[126]** one sees that one is under the power of afflictive emotions. One should then think as follows: since I understand through skillful analysis that these phenomena do not have even an iota of inherent existence, how could I behave like a child who lacks skill in analyzing the way things really are and is a slave of afflictive emotions? Thinking like this, one should practice realizing spacelike emptiness in meditative equipoise and illusionlike emptiness in the subsequent state.

And so, the arguments of this chapter are the eyes provided by the master to see all of the scriptures presenting the object to be grasped, the means of grasping and the grasper as empty of essence. Therefore, having found this eye, one should experience the joy of seeing the way things really are through those texts.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

When the six objects are posited as that which is to be grasped, the six sense faculties are posited as the means by which they are grasped, and the six kinds

of person are posited as the graspers, one should recognize that the mode of grasping of these phenomena is not as merely posited through the power of nominal convention, but that they are grasped as existing inherently. One should ascertain, as established by arguments, that there would be no grounds for positing agent, object, and instrument if they existed in the way that they are grasped. Thereafter, it will spontaneously become apparent that all of these eighteen phenomena, although they do not exist inherently, appear respectively as illusionlike agent, object, and instrument.

Then, it should be ascertained that all that is posited, such as the eye, seeing, etc., are completely tenable only as illusionlike objects. This rational analysis is an investigation into whether or not such things as the eye exist *inherently*, but not an investigation into whether or not they *merely* exist. Therefore, when they are not found through the analysis, their *essential* existence is refuted, but such things as the eye are not refuted at all. **[127]** As the commentary to *Catuḥśataka* says,

> Supposed one asked, "If such things as the eye were impossible, then how could these sensory faculties, like the visual faculties, be posited as the results of karma?" We would reply, "Do we refute the results of karma?" Suppose he then asked, "Since you have proven that such things as the eye are refuted, how can you not have refuted those results?" We would then reply, "This is because our analysis is focused on the investigation of essence. We refute the inherent existence of entities, but we do not refute such things as the eye as functioning, or as dependently originated, or as the effects of karma. Therefore, since they exist, that which is called the result, that is, such things as the eye, indeed exist. [*dBu ma* ya 201b]

This clearly explains the demarcation drawn between what is refuted and what is not refuted. Therefore their mode of existence is as presented here:

> The seer depends on seeing.
> Seeing also depends on the seer.
> Apart from this
> No cause is seen for their existence.[18]

Through this, the rest should be understood. Although the arguments presented in the earlier chapters can refute the true existence of the faculties, this chapter has been composed so that one might understand the specific arguments refuting the essence of such things as seeing. This should be understood in the context of other chapters as well. Through such analysis, one

18. This is a rearrangement of [VIII: 12].

will develop boundless wisdom, particularly with respect to the analysis of the way things really are; and it will be apparent that all experience of the six kinds of object is like that of an illusory person experiencing an illusory object.

This is the commentary on the third chapter, having eight verses, called "the examination of the sense faculties."

CHAPTER IV

Examination of the Aggregates

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
   - 1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the form aggregate
     - 1.1.1 Refutation of cause and effect with respect to their being different in entity
     - 1.1.2 Refutation of cause and effect being existent or non existent and the same or different
   - 1.2 Applying this argument to the other aggregates
   - 1.3 The mode of reply to arguments advanced by others
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the section of the text explaining that the three kinds of phenomena are selfless. We have completed the first part—the refutation of the phenomenal self of the faculties—and we now turn to the second part—the refutation of the phenomenal self of the aggregates **[128:2]**. There are three parts to this chapter: explaining the meaning of the chapter; confirmation by citation from definitive sūtras; summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

In response to this previous analysis one might say, "Even though the sense faculties have been refuted, since the five aggregates have not been refuted, it follows that they exist. If they exist, since the sense faculties are included among them, it follows that they exist essentially."

The refutation of this argument has three parts: refutation of the essential existence of the form aggregate, applying this argument to the other aggregates, the mode of reply to the arguments advanced by others.

1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the form aggregate

This section has two parts: refutation of cause and effect with respect to their being different in entity and refutation of cause and effect being existent or nonexistent and the same or different.

1.1.1 Refutation of cause and effect with respect to their being different in entity

According to the *Abhidharma,* form, whatever it might be, either is one of the four great elements or is caused by the four great elements. Having said that, the earth principle[1] and the others of the four are the causal forms, the four elements. The five—the sense faculties, eye, etc., and the five, from the form faculties to tangible resultant form—are described as the resultant form [*Śālistambhasūtra, mDo sde* tsha 124a]. When it is described like this, cause and effect are grasped as having their own characteristics, and the thesis by means of which we refute this is

> 1. Apart from the cause of form,
> Form cannot be conceived.
> Apart from form,
> The cause of form is not apparent.

Apart from the cause of the form of such things as the eye—the four elements—inherently existent distinct resultant form cannot be perceived. Not only that, but apart from what is called resultant form, the cause of resultant form is not apparent as inherently distinct from them. To prove these two theses, it says,

> 2. If apart from the cause of form there were form,
> Form would, absurdly, be without a cause.
> But nowhere is there a thing
> Without a cause.

1. Here we use *principle* instead of *element* for *khams* to indicate that earth in this sense is not so much a *constituent* as an *aspect* of material phenomena in this sense.

If the resultant form existed inherently apart from the cause of such things as the eye, **[129]** the absurd consequence would follow that form would be a without a cause, because this contradicts its dependency. Since there cannot be anything—entity—without a cause, form without a cause makes no sense.

> 3. If apart from form
> There were a cause of form,
> It would be a cause without an effect.
> But there are no causes without effects.

If apart from resultant form, a cause of form existed essentially, that would be a cause without an effect because what it is for a cause to have the defining characteristic of a cause is to bring about an effect; but if they were inherently different the effect would not depend on it, and in that case it would not bring about its effect. A cause without an effect is a non-cause; like a sky flower, it does not have the defining characteristic of a cause. These two reductios each project a contrapositive, each of which in turn establishes a thesis. The refutation of cause and effect having the same nature, since it is directed at our own schools, is not mentioned here. If they had different natures, the dependency would make no sense. Thus he demonstrates that the absurd consequence of being without a cause would follow. So this is different from the previous argument refuting arising from another.

1.1.2 Refutation of cause and effect being existent or nonexistent and the same or different

> 4. When form exists,
> A cause of form is not tenable.
> When form is nonexistent,
> A cause of form is not tenable.

Moreover, if the elements are thought to be the cause of form, there are only two alternatives: if form existed, that there is a cause of form could not be tenable. For an existent, what would an additional cause do, as it is not necessary? If form were nonexistent, then a cause of form would be incoherent. If it were nonexistent, of what would the cause be a cause? Cause and effect are mutually implicative. Although this was said in the examination of conditions, since it is relevant, it is mentioned here.

Suppose one argues that, although a cause of form makes no sense, the resultant form exists, and that since it exists, its cause must exist.

> 5. Form itself without a cause
> Is neither possible nor tenable.

Therefore, never conceptualize
Ideas about form.

It has already been explained that the cause of form is essentially nonexistent. Therefore, without a cause, the existence of resultant form does not make sense. Saying "neither possible . . ." by using two negations so emphatically, **[130]** the position of causelessness—that no entities depend upon causes—is presented as the stupidest idea ever.

Since apart from the cause of form, form cannot be conceived or observed, since it makes no sense for there to be a cause either of existent or of nonexistent form, and since there is no causeless form, a practitioner who realizes the way things really are should never conceptualize ideas such as the solidity, nonsolidity, visibility, or invisibility of form. Buddhapālita says, "Somebody wise like you, who wants to realize the way things really are, should never conceptualize any idea about form. For how can you think about something with no locus?" [178b][2]

6. The assertion that the cause and effect are similar
Makes no sense.
The assertion that they are not similar
Makes no sense.

Moreover, if the elements are considered as causes, do they produce effects similar to or different from themselves? It would not make sense to say that there is inherently existent resultant form that is similar to its cause, an element, because the four elements are solid, liquid, hot, and mobile, whereas the five sense faculties such as the eye, are the clear forms that constitute the basis of such things as the visual consciousness. The faculties of external form, etc.[3] are to be grasped by such things as visual consciousness, but they do not have the nature of the elements. This shows that if the cause and effect are inherently similar, that similarity would not be dependent on a cause. Thus, if they were partly similar, they should be completely similar. As it says in Nāgārjuna's *Lokātītastava,*

Since the elements are not perceived by the eye
How could that to which they give rise be perceived by the eye?
When form is explained in this way,
Your grasping of form is undone.[4] [5]

2. This is a slight paraphrase of the *Buddhapālita*, but with no change of sense.

3. It is important to bear in mind that in a standard Buddhist analysis of sense faculties, the faculties comprise their *objects* as well as the sense organs and cognitive structures enabling perception.

4. The edition Tsong khapa quotes differs from the sDe dge. His reads *'byung rnams mig gzung ma yin na/de byung mig gzung ji ltar zyes/gzugs la de skad gsungs pa na/khyod kyis gzugs kyi 'dzin pa bzlog//*. The sDe dge edition reads *'byung ba mig gis gzung min pa/de de dnos mig gi ji ltar yin/ gzugs nyid gzung bar rab bkag pa/gzugs*

This shows that since the elements are not perceived by the eye, the blue, yellow, etc., which are arisen from them are also not perceived. This argument shows that if they existed inherently, they should be similar with respect to whether they are seen or not seen by the eye. **[131]** Seeds of the same kind, such as rice seeds, are not seen as cause and effect. This argument also shows that it does not make sense for the cause and effect to be similar. When one such pair of things of the same kind are seen not to be causes and effects, this negates other things so related being causes and effects. This is also implied by the earlier explanation.

Nor does it make sense to say that the effect is not similar to the cause. This is because if, even though it were not similar to the cause, they could be cause and effect inherently, then any things not similar to one another could be cause and effect.

1.2 Applying this argument to the other aggregates

> 7. Feelings, discriminations, dispositions,
> Consciousness and all such things
> Should be thought of in every way
> In the same way as form.

Feelings, discriminations, dispositions, and consciousness should be understood in the same way, that is, *similarly*. To what? To the form aggregate. In what way? In the way the essence of the form aggregate is refuted: exactly the same mode should be applied to the remaining four aggregates. Just as the existence of form is refuted by analyzing to determine whether it is the same as or different from its cause, by thoroughly examining whether the pairs—feeling and sensation, consciousness and the discriminations that arise with it, ignorance and the dispositions, dispositions and consciousness—are the same or different, their existence should be refuted. By saying "in every way," it indicates that analysis in terms of existence and nonexistence, cause and effect, and similarity and dissimilarity should all be applied. Not only that, but the three analyses of form should be applied in every way to all "things" such as characteristic and characterized, cause and effect, part and whole, and all other such things.

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nyid khyod kyis de ltar gsung//. [*bstod tshogs* ka 68b] which would read,

> Since the elements are not perceived by the eyes
> How could their entities be perceived by the eye?
> The perception of material form itself is completely refuted.
> You have thus presented material form.

1.3 The mode of reply to arguments advanced by others

8. When an argument is advanced on the grounds of emptiness,
If someone were to offer a reply,
Any such reply will fail, since it will presuppose
Exactly what is to be proven.

The mādhyamika maintains that just as he presents one thing as essentially empty, he presents all things in the same way. Thus, just by asserting the thesis that things are essentially empty—by advancing the argument—the **[132]** opponent's position is refuted, just by the argument that form is essenceless. Nonetheless, the proponent of nonemptiness "offers a reply" that since other things, such as feeling, exist, form must exist as well. "Any such reply" is inapposite. This is because the essential existence of such things as feeling "need to be proven" just as much as the essential existence of form. The master says this in order to explain that the mādhyamika can respond to any of these oppenents' arguments by pointing out that they are invalid because they "presuppose what is to be proven."

9. When an explanation is made through emptiness,
Whoever would find fault with it
Will find no fault, since any such criticism will presuppose
Exactly what is to be proven.

In the same way, when an explanation is made through emptiness, if someone such as a student advances a criticism, none of his arguments will locate any error because they presuppose exactly what is to be proven. As it says in the *Catuḥśataka*:

He who sees one thing
Sees all things.
Since one thing is empty,
All things are empty. [VIII: 16]

"These two verses should be understood as appended to every chapter" [*Buddhapālita* 180a].

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that definitive sūtras also prove the aggregates to be empty through their very nature, and to show that the explanations of all of these sūtras are contained in this chapter.

The *Heart Sūtra* says,

A son or daughter of noble lineage who desires to engage in the profound practice of the perfection of wisdom should do so in this way: . . . The five aggregates should also be correctly seen to be empty of essence. [*Sher phyin* ka 145a] **[133]**

The Sūtra addressed to the śrāvakas says,

Form is like a bubble.
Feeling is said to be like an emerging spring.
Perception is like mirage.
Dispositions are like a plantain.

Consciousness is said to be like an illusion.
So said the illustrious one.[5] [*Mãñjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtra, mDo sde* ka 239b and *dKon brtsegs* ca 272a]

In particular, the *Gaganagañja-paripṛcchā-sūtra* shows that just as any one thing is empty by nature, all other things should be seen in the same way:

Whoever understands through one phenomenon that all phenomena are like an illusion, like a mirage, and are ungraspable, unreal, false, and not enduring without delay enters into the essence of enlightenment. [*mDo sde* pa 281a][6]

The *Samādhirāja-sūtra* also says,

You should apply your understanding
Of the perception of the self to all.
That nature of all phenomena
Is perfect, just like the sky. [*mDo sde* da, 44a][7]

Through one, all are understood.
Through one, all are seen.
Although many varieties are spoken of,
No pride is arisen. [*mDo sde* da, 41a]

This is the order of analysis. The mode of realization of the selflessness of the person that arises after a search that does not find the essence of the self, which is the basis of "I am," should apply to all phenomena. This is the order of realization, but the mode of selflessness of the person and that of phenomena are explained to be similar.

5. Pali *Phennapiṇḍupamasuttam, Khandhavaggo, saṁyutta-nikāya*; pp. 358–360, Nava Nalanda, 1959; Sanskrit quoted in *Prasannapadā* [240].

6. The sDe dge edition has a different meter, and a slight variation in translation.

7. The sDe dge edition has a different meter, and a slight variation in translation.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

As the causes and effects of the aggregates have been explained, one should establish by reasoning that cause and effect make no sense at all if they exist as they are grasped—as existing inherently, without being merely nominally imputed. Thereafter, one should train one's mind in reasoning which shows, through dependent origination, by the mutual reinforcement of the ascertainment of their aspects of emptiness and of appearance, that only in the context of nominal imputation do the elements and that which is arisen from elements—such things as contact and feeling—make sense.

This is the commentary on the fourth chapter, having nine verses, called "the examination of the aggregates."

CHAPTER V

Examination of the Elements

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  - 1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the six elements
    - 1.1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of space
      - 1.1.1.1 Refutation of characteristic and characterized in space
        - 1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of the basis of characteristics
          - 1.1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of characterization
            - 1.1.1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of characterization through the analysis in terms of priority and posteriority
            - 1.1.1.1.1.1.2 Refutation of characterization through the analysis of characterization in terms of the existence and nonexistence of characteristics
          - 1.1.1.1.1.2 Demonstration that thereby the basis of characteristics is refuted
        - 1.1.1.1.2 Refutation of characteristics
        - 1.1.1.1.3 Drawing conclusions
      - 1.1.1.2 Refutation of the existence of space as an entity and as a nonentity
        - 1.1.1.2.1 The main point
        - 1.1.1.2.2 Rebutting their refutations
      - 1.1.1.3 Drawing conclusions from the refutations
    - 1.1.2 Applying this argument to the remainder of the elements
  - 1.2 Condemning the extreme views of reification and nihilism
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the section of the text explaining that the three kinds of phenomena are selfless. We have completed the first two parts—the refutation of the phenomenal self of the faculties and the refutation of the phenomenal self of the aggregates—and we now turn to the third part: the refutation of the self of phenomena with respect to the elements. **[134:5]** This chapter constitutes the third part. There are three parts to this chapter: explanation of the meaning of the chapter, confirmation by citation from definitive sūtras, and summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here, one might say that since the elements have not been refuted, and since the Transcendent Lord has said, "Great Emperor, this person comprises six elements," [*Pitāputrasamāgama-sūtra, dKon brtsegs* nga 127b], and thus demonstrated the six elements—earth, water, air, fire, space, and consciousness—and their characteristics—solidity, liquidity, mobility, heat, unobstructedness, and awareness—that without essence, the presentation of the characteristics does not make sense. Therefore, since the characteristics exist, the elements exist essentially. And so, just as do the elements, the senses and other faculties exist essentially.

If indeed the elements existed essentially, the other two could also exist in the same manner, but they do not exist essentially. In what way do they not? This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the six elements and condemning the extreme views of reification and nihilism.

1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the six elements

The section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of space and applying this argument to the remainder of the elements.

1.1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of space

This section has three parts: the refutation of characteristic and characterized in space, the refutation of the existence of space as an entity and as a nonentity, and drawing conclusions from the refutations.

1.1.1.1 Refutation of characteristic and characterized in space

This section has three parts: the refutation of the basis of characteristics, refutation of characteristics, and drawing of conclusions.

1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of the basis of characteristics

This section has two parts: refutation of characterization and demonstration that thereby the basis of characteristics is refuted. **[135]**

1.1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of characterization

This section has two parts: refutation of characterization through the analysis in terms of priority and posteriority and refutation of characterization through the analysis of characterization in terms of the existence and nonexistence of characteristics.

1.1.1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of characterization through the analysis in terms of priority and posteriority

1. Prior to a characteristic of space
There is not the slightest space.
If it existed prior to the characteristic
Then it would, absurdly, exist without a characteristic.

In sūtra, the earth element is explained first. However, here, the essential existence of space is refuted first, since ordinary people know space to be empty, but the other elements are not so known. So through that commonly known fact, what is not yet known is established, and so it says "Prior to the characteristic of space."

Here, suppose someone were to argue that since neither we, nor those of any other schools, maintain that the characterized is prior to the characteristic, it is therefore inappropriate to establish that space does not exist prior to the characteristic of space. We reply that even though the others do not maintain that the characterized exists prior to the characteristic, its *mere nonexistence* is not established.

So what are we doing here? To quote the *Buddhapālita*, "If prior to the characteristic of space, even the slightest 'space,' were to exist, then it would be possible to demonstrate that this is the characteristic of this space" [180a]. He means that if they existed sequentially, such a demonstration would be possible; but since it is not, it is not be possible. The latter (space and its characteristic not being sequential) is coherent. And since the former (characteristic and characterized in general being sequential) would be its superordinate category, this shows that the coherence of the superordinate category is refuted.

We also go as far as accepting the sūtra's explanation of the characteristic of space as nonobstructiveness. But when others maintain that nonobstructiveness is said to the characteristic of space, they maintain that this means that they are inherently characteristic and characterized. It is being demonstrated that it would follow from this that they would be sequential. Here is why it would follow: There are only three possible moments of characterization. "Nor in the characterized does the characteristic arise" [V:3b] will refute simultaneity. Of the two sequential possibilities—characterization where the characteristic is prior to the characterized **[136]** and characterization in the reverse order—the latter is more difficult to refute. This is because taking the basis of characterization[1] to be earlier and its characterization by its characteristic to be later is a more serious issue; when one is sure that the basis of characterization is not earlier, there is less chance of grasping it as characterized earlier. Therefore, Nāgārjuna refutes at least the priority of the characterized over the characteristic.

If the characterization by the characteristic of space—nonobstructiveness—existed essentially, it would not make sense for the characterization to be characterizing in the other two temporal periods. So, if the characteristic is to characterize the characterized, (space) which exists prior to its characteristics, then prior to the characteristic of space (nonobstructiveness) the basis of characterization (space) would not exist in the slightest. So, what does the characteristic characterize?

> 2. A thing without a characteristic
> Has never existed.
> If nothing lacks a characteristic,
> What do characteristics characterize?

If space existed prior to the characteristic—nonobstructiveness—the absurd consequence would follow that there would be no characteristic at that time. In that case, space would be nonexistent, since according to no philosophical system does any entity or object without a characteristic exist.

Suppose someone says, "Since there is characterization by characteristics, and it characterizes the characterized, that characterization exists, and so the characterized exists." It has already been explained that prior to the characteristics there is no entity or object without characteristics. And so, since there is no basis of characteristic to be characterized by the characteristic, there is no characterization. This refutes the idea that prior to any characteristic, even without characteristic, there is characterization.

1. *'Jug gzhi* is most often *referent,* but here is clearly used as a synonym for *mtshan zhi,* which we are translating as *characterized.*

1.1.1.1.1.1.2 Refutation of characterization through the analysis of characterization in terms of the existence and nonexistence of characteristics

> 3. Characteristics do not characterize the uncharacterized.
> Nor do they characterize the characterized.
> Nor do they characterize anything other
> Than the characterized and the uncharacterized.

Moreover, if characterization existed inherently, there are only three possibilities: characteristics do not characterize that which lacks characteristics because even conventionally it does not make sense for phenomena to be without characteristics, and thus without a basis characterization would be contradictory. **[137]** Characteristics do not inherently characterize an object that has a characteristic because for such a thing characterization is unnecessary: What would an additional characteristic do for that which has a characteristic inherently? If there were characterization of the already characterized, there would be an infinite regress of characterization.

With respect to this, such characteristics as unobstructedness are sufficient reasons[2] for things being characterized phenomena, such as space. With respect to conventional existence, there is no contradiction. But with respect to ultimate existence, this makes no sense. It has been explained many times that with respect to simultaneous, inherently existent phenomena, dependence does not make sense. Therefore, since inherently existent characteristic and characterized would be unrelated, it makes no sense for the characteristic to be a sufficient reason.

This also means that if something existed inherently, then since it would have to exist through its own power and it would have to be an entity that stands on its own, it does not make sense for it to be related to others as dependent on them. Therefore if an inherently existent thing were to depend on a sufficient reason, since it would have to be impossible at each moment be for it to be independent, there would be an infinite regress.

The characteristic does not characterize anything other than that which has or that which lacks a characteristic, because that is impossible. This is because having a characteristic is the opposite of lacking a characteristic, and lacking a characteristic is the opposite of having one. Thus, having and lacking a characteristic are mutually exclusive. Concerning this, the Jains say, "With respect to life the person has no characteristic, but with respect to the body it

2. Here we translate *sgrub byed* as *sufficient reason*, recalling the varying and related senses Schopenhauer gives to that term, as *sgrub byed* here has a similar semantic range. One should bear this logical, causal, and ontological range in mind.

has." They assert that something has or lacks a characteristic only in context. However, this does not escape from the individual refutations of these respective positions.

1.1.1.1.1.2 Demonstration that thereby the basis of characteristics is refuted

Suppose someone said, "Although the essential characterization of the basis of characteristics has been refuted, by applying this refutation, the whole does not apply to the parts, **[138]** and so the basis of characterization exists inherently."

> 4. When there is no characterization
> The basis of characteristics makes no sense.

Since characterization does not exist inherently, it makes no sense for the basis of characteristics to exist essentially, because the only reason to posit the basis of characteristics is characterization.

Here, you have maintained that the space element exists essentially by relying on the premise that it has the characteristic of nonobstructiveness. However, that does not make sense, since there is no characterization. So, how could it make sense for your basis of characterization to exist essentially?

1.1.1.1.2 Refutation of characteristics

Suppose one thought, "Characterization has been refuted, but since the characteristic has not been refuted, the characteristic exists essentially. So the basis of characterization still exists."

> 4cd. Since the basis of characteristics makes no sense,
> There is no characteristic either.

Since it has been demonstrated that it makes no sense for the basis of characteristics to exist on the grounds that there is no characterization, it makes no sense for the basis of characteristics to exist essentially; moreover, since there is no basis, the characteristic does not exist essentially, either. Since there is no characteristic without a basis, it makes no sense to assert that the characteristic exists essentially, even though the basis has been refuted.

1.1.1.1.3 Drawing conclusions

> 5. Therefore there is no basis of characteristic
> Because there is no characteristic.

Through an exhaustive examination, it has been determined that characterization does not makes sense, and therefore that the basis of characteristics does not exist essentially; thus, nor is there any existence of a characteristic without a basis. Thus concludes the foregoing refutations.

1.1.1.2 Refutation of the existence of space as an entity and as a nonentity

This section has two parts: the main point and rebutting their refutations.

1.1.1.2.1 The main point

Suppose one argued further as follows: Although the characteristic and the basis of characteristic do not exist essentially, space, having the nature of an entity, exists. Since that is the case, these are the characteristic and the basis of characteristic. Consequently, these two exist essentially. **[139]**

> 5cd. Nor is there any entity
> Other than the basis of characteristic and the characteristic.

The other schools, such as the Vaiśeṣikas, maintain that space is substantially existent. Of our schools, the Vaibhāṣikas maintain that space is an entity. Buddhist schools are unanimous in maintaining that space is free from obstructiveness, that is, from being an obstacle to contact. However, the Vaibhāṣikas maintain that space is an entity, thinking that if it were an *external negation—merely not being* an obstacle to contact—then it would not have the *positive* quality of being accommodating to others. Since space positively accommodates other material forms, it performs a function.[3]

If space positively accommodated others, this would be the case. However, positively accommodating another material object occurs only through a material object, like a pot, moving to another place, but not through space itself positively accommodating it. Exclusion also occurs when one material object occupies a place and another material object is prevented from entering it, being thereby excluded. In order to permit another material object to enter that place, the first one has to move someplace else. Therefore, whenever you accept accommodation, you have to accept going and coming.

It has already been demonstrated that these arguments, as well as arguments that undermine the compatibility of permanence and entityhood, with-

3. From the standpoint of most Buddhist philosophical schools, to perform a function just is to be an entity, and vice versa.

out refuting space being an entity, show that neither space as a basis of characteristics nor nonobstructiveness as a characteristic exists inherently. There is no entity apart from basis of characteristic and characteristic, and so the refutation, the argument concerning space—that space does not exist as an entity through its essence—is intended to apply to the all of the other elements as well.

Suppose one thought that, according to our other reificationist schools, the external negation—the absence of obstacle to contact—is maintained to be a non entity, and thus to exist inherently as a non entity.

> 6. If no entity exists,
> Of what entity would an absence be?

Space is posited merely as the absence of obstructive material form. If material form existed inherently, **[140]** the mere absence of obstructive forms in space would also exist inherently. However, according to the arguments advanced earlier, since material objects do not exist inherently, would space be the absence of what entity? Of none!

Suppose someone were to offer this argument: On the grounds of the nonexistence of the entity of the rabbit's horns, is not that negation—the nonexistence of rabbit's horns—instantiated in the nonentity of the rabbit's horns? How could you think it reasonable that the absence of an *object of negation* is the ground for the absence of a *negation*? Here is what this means: The cases are not similar: If conventionally mere entity were not possible, conventionally the entitylessness of the pot would not be possible. Similarly, since ultimately mere entity is not possible, the ultimate existence of the entitylessness of obstruction is not possible.

1.1.1.2.2 Rebutting their refutations

Suppose someone says that since you—who are the agent of the investigation into whether entities exist or do not exist—exist, it follows that the object of the investigation into whether entities exist or not must also exist.

> 6cd. Entities and nonentities are mutually exclusive.
> Who knows entities and nonentities?

Therefore, whoever is the agent of the analysis and knowledge of entities and nonentities cannot escape from the three possibilities: If it exists essentially as an entity, "other than the basis" refutes it; if it exists essentially as a nonentity, "if there is no existent entity" refutes it; and since these have already been refuted, they make no sense. There is no third alternative for the agent—neither an entity nor an nonentity—since these are mutually exclusive and

exhaustive. And since there is not, the agent of investigation does not exist essentially. According to the Transcendent Lord,

> Whoever understands entities as entityless
> Will not cling to entities.
> Whoever does not cling to entities
> Achieves nonrepresentational meditation. [*Samādhirāja sūtra, mDo sde* da 152b][4]

Thus it explains that anyone who understands that all entities are essenceless will not grasp any entity, such as the agent of analysis as truly existing. **[141]**

> Whoever conceptualizes empty phenomena,
> Such a fool has entered bad paths.
> Through words, phenomena are asserted to be empty.
> Through words, they are shown to be wordless.
>
> Whoever conceptualizes peace and the thorough pacification of phenomena,
> One with that kind of mind can never renounce.
> All fabrications are mental conceptualizations.
> Therefore phenomena should be understood to be inconceivable. [*Upāliparipṛcchā-sūtra, dKon brtsegs* ca 128b]

The meaning of the two lines "Whoever conceptualizes empty . . ." is not that to *think* about emptiness is to enter into bad paths; the two lines "Whoever conceptualizes peace . . ." show that whoever *conceptualizes* emptiness—a negation—grasping it as truly existent, has entered bad paths. The phrase ". . . wordless" shows that that through which phenomena are shown to be empty of essence shows itself to be selfless. This is canonical authority for the true nonexistence of the agent who refutes the true existence of nonentities.

1.1.1.3 Drawing conclusions from the refutations

> 7. Therefore space is neither an entity.
> Nor is it a nonentity.
> It is neither characterized nor characteristic.

We can conclude from the previous explanations that, according to such analyses, since it makes no sense that space exists inherently, it cannot so exist in any of these four ways: neither as an entity, nor as a nonentity, nor as the characterized, nor as the characteristic.

4. The sDe dge edition gives a slight variant reading.

In place of the word *mtshon bya*[5] commonly used in Tibet, the word *mtshan gzhi*[6] is used in this text and in many other translations of Indian texts. Since these two terms correspond to a single Sanskrit word *lakṣya*, it makes no sense to treat *mtshon bya* and *mtshan gzhi* differently when they occur in the same structure of characterized and characteristic. Nonetheless, it is unreasonable to say on the basis of the argument just presented that the threefold categorization into characteristic, characterized, and basis of characteristic does not make sense:[7] When proving a thesis through a premise, we need all three, the thesis, the proof, and the basis of the proof; it is the same with the characteristic characterizing the characterized. Since this is the case, I agree that you need a similar triad with respect to the referent.[8] **[142]** When one word has two meanings, if something satisfies one of these meanings, that does not mean that it satisfies the other. There are many cases like this.

1.1.2 Applying this argument to the remainder of the elements

> 7d. The same is true of the other five elements.

Earth and the rest of the five elements other than space also should be understood in the same way: empty of being inherently existent entities, non-entities, characteristics or characterized. And so we can rearrange the text as follows:

> Prior to a characteristic of the earth element
> There is not the slightest earth.

and

> Therefore earth is not an entity.

And this could be applied to the rest of them as well.

When in the *Abhidharma* the external and internal faculties are presented as subject and object, the aggregates as causes and effects, and the characteristics of the six elements are presented, in order to undo the grasping of them

5. Which we have translated as *characterized*.

6. Which we have also often translated as *characterized*, reflecting the synonymy of these two terms and the fact that they translate the same Sanskrit term, but sometimes as *basis of characteristic*, depending on context, where it is necessary to reflect the relation between characteristics and their bases.

7. *mTshon bya* and *mtshan gzhi* are distinguished in a context where one property is the *mtshan gzhi* (the basis of characteristic) for another and the other is the *mtshan nyid* (the characteristic), all grounded in an instance which is the *mtshon bya* (the characterized thing) as in the case where impermanence is the *mtshon bya*, momentariness is the *mtshan nyid*, and a pot is the *mtshan gzhi*. The pot is the basis of the characteristic; it has the characteristic of being momentary, and momentariness characterizes it *qua* instance of impermanence.

8. Tsong khapa means that one also needs a referent (*brjod bya*), a basis of reference (*brjod gzhi*), and a mode of presentation (*brjod byed*).

as existing inherently as they are presented, the reasoning specific to each one is explained. However, since each of the three ways of grasping true existence arises with respect to all three kinds of entities, the refutatory argument for each of the three entities must be presented. Therefore, the arguments are not specific to the entities.

1.2 Condemning the extreme views of reification and nihilism.

8. Those fools who see entities
As existent or as nonexistent
Do not see that which is to be seen
As pacified and peaceful.

Since it makes no sense to say that those four phenomena exist inherently, the fools are those whose wisdom-eye is obscured by the cataracts of ignorance, and so who from beginningless time, are conditioned to see falsely the existence and nonexistence of entities, and so have failed to enter the path conducive to liberation, *viz.*, the path of seeing essencelessness nonerroneously. They, because of their stupidity, do not understand the most profound dependent origination, and therefore, by seeing entities as existent, that is, as reified; or as nonexistent, that is, as nullified, their cognitive perception is obscured. They do not see the object to be perceived—nirvana, the pacified that has the characteristic of peace, free from all conceptual constructions, free from all fabrication of knower and known—the ultimate, **[143]** which is to have the nature of emptiness.

Buddhapālita replies to the following argument: If there were no aggregates, elements or faculties, it would be absurd for the Victor usually to present the Dharma based on these. He replies that though we present them as free from the two extremes of existence and nonexistence, we do not maintain that they do not exist. So it does not follow that for us the teaching of the Dharma is absurd. For those who see them in terms of the extremes of existence and nonexistence, the presentation of the Dharma would be absurd, because with those kinds of views nirvana cannot be achieved [182a]. This rebuts this refutation of all of the three previous chapters.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that the negation of the essence of existent and nonexistent entities and of characteristic and characterized with respect to the six elements is not merely a sophistry, but instead is established by

definitive sūtras, and in order to demonstrate that this chapter explains all of the scriptures' similar refutations of the essence of the elements. The fact that one should not retain the extreme views of existence and nonexistence is confirmed by previous citations from the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*, etc., as the *Brahmaviśeṣacintiparipṛcchā-sūtra* says:[9]

> Any inner or outer earth element is a non-dual object. Thus the Tathāgata completely comprehended through wisdom and insight that non-duality, the indivisibility into two, and that although things have a single characteristic, they are completely known as characteristicless. [*mDo sde* kha 223b]
>
> > While in a mundane sense, space has a characteristic
> > There is no characteristic of space.
> > Therefore when it is so comprehended
> > It is not stained by mundane phenomena. [*mDo sde* pa 37a]
>
> And in the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtra* it says,
>
> Daughter, how should space be viewed? The girl said, "Oh Mañjuśrī, here is how, for example: when this triple world is burned at the end of the aeon even the ashes do not remain." [*mDo sde* kha 230b] **[144]**

So, the arguments of this chapter should be understood as an eye with which to see the scriptures—particularly all of those that present phenomena as free from characteristics and the bases of characteristics—and that eye should be perfected.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

One should ascertain the meaning established by these arguments to be that with respect to the elements, if characteristic and characterized and existence and nonexistence of entity as they are presented by the sūtras existed inherently, instead of being merely posited through the force of nominal conventions, then characteristic and characterized cannot be posited. Having ascertained that meaning, one should then ascertain the meanings of the two truths in the following, completely adequate way: Only insofar as they are posited merely through nominal convention are characteristic and characterized and the existence and nonexistence of entities possible.

This is the commentary on the fifth chapter, having eight verses, called "the examination of the elements."

9. Tsong khapa has actually misattributed this quotation. It is actually found in the *Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita-sūtra*.

CHAPTER VI

Examination of Desire and the Desirous One

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of desire and the desirous one
    1.1.1 Refutation of them occurring sequentially
      1.1.1.1 Refutation of the existence or nonexistence of the desirous one prior to desire
      1.1.1.2 Refutation of the existence or nonexistence of desire prior to the desirous one
    1.1.2 Refutation of them existing simultaneously
      1.1.2.1 Refutation of their simultaneity through their independence
      1.1.2.2 Refutation of their simultaneity through identity and difference
        1.1.2.2.1 General refutation of their simultaneity with respect to identity and difference
        1.1.2.2.2 Specific refutation of their being simultaneous while different
          1.1.2.2.2.1 Nonestablishment of simultaneity through the nonestablishment of difference
          1.1.2.2.2.2 Non-necessity of establishing simultaneity when difference is established
          1.1.2.2.2.3 Presentation of mutual dependence when difference depends on simultaneity
  1.2 Drawing conclusions from these arguments
  1.3 Applications of these arguments to other phenomena
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are in the section of the text explaining the selflessness of phenomena, and having completed the first part of that section, which was the demonstration of selflessness in three phenomena, we now turn to the second part, of that section which is the refutation of the argument that there is a self in phenomena. **[144:11]** This section has three parts: refutation of the defilements—that which depends on the basis; refutation of the existence of the characteristics: arising, ceasing, and enduring; and refutation of the existence of the cause—agent and action. The present chapter is the first of these and has three parts: the explanation of the meaning of the chapter, confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here someone might say that the aggregates, the elements, and the faculties exist essentially because the defilements, which depend on them, exist; and this is because the Tathāgata has said, "Oh monks, when some childish, uneducated person, fallen into the extreme of reification, has seen material forms with his eyes, the mind becomes obsessed with them as the locus of pleasure. Having developed that obsession, desire arises. Having become desirous, body speech and mind act out of desire" [*Pitāputrasamāgama-Sūtra*, *mDo sde* nga 13b]. **[145]** Thus it is said that afflictive emotions such as desire—the causes of the afflictions—exist. If such things as desire existed essentially, such things as the aggregates would also exist essentially. However, this is not the case!

This section has three parts: the refutation of the essential existence of desire and the desirous, drawing conclusions from these arguments, the application of these arguments to other phenomena.

1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of desire and the desirous one

This section has two parts: the refutation of them occurring sequentially and the refutation of them occurring simultaneously.

1.1.1 Refutation of them occurring sequentially

This section has two parts: the refutation of the existence or nonexistence of the desirous prior to desire and the refutation of the existence or nonexistence of desire prior to the desirous one.

1.1.1.1 Refutation of the existence or nonexistence of the desirous one prior to desire

> 1. If prior to desire
> There were a desirous one without desire,
> Depending on that, desire would exist.
> Desire would exist when there is a desirous one.

If desire existed essentially, then there are only three alternatives: Existing simultaneously with the desirous one will be refuted later; here the analysis concerns whether the desirous one exists prior to desire or after it. If prior to desire, without desire—that is, free from desire—a desirous one existed, then desire would exist in dependence on the desirous one who existed earlier. If so, it would make sense to say that if the desirous one exists first, desire exists thereafter. However, there is no desirous one free from desire. Otherwise, an arhat would also have desire. So, desire is a mental episode with an aspect of craving arising from the objectification of desirable contaminated objects. The desirous one is the mind which, or the person who, desires the object that is the basis of desire.

> 2. Were there no desirous one, moreover,
> Where would desire occur?

Suppose one says that if for the desirous one to exists first and the desire to exist later makes no sense, then without the desirous one existing earlier, there would have to be a desire existing later. However, since it is not the case that when the desirous one exists first there is desire later how, **[146]** without the desirous one existing earlier, can the desire come to be? It cannot. Because it would have no basis, just as without a fruit, its ripening would not be possible. The refutation of the desirous one being the basis of the simultaneous desire will be explained in the context of the refutation of their simultaneity. Here it is shown that if the desirous one were to come after the desire, the desire would have no basis.

Buddhapālita says that the first verse explains that without a previously existing desirous one, desire makes no sense as follows: If, prior to desire, the desirous one, without desire—that is, with something other than it—exists, then on that basis, desire would arise. The reason for this is that only if there were a desirous one would it make sense that this desire would be his. If there were no desirous one, then whose desire would that be? For without a basis, desire makes no sense. And so, without a desirous one, desire makes no sense. Thereafter, in response to this argument—"if the desirous one exists, then desire exists"—he continues, quoting, "though the desirous one exists, how can desire exist?" [183a] So, if the desirous one already exists, then since the

desire would not make him a desirous one it would not be desire. Otherwise nothing would fail to be desire. Thus, he says that in this case, even though the desirous one exists, desire makes no sense [183b]. *Prajñāpradīpā* comments on the two lines beginning "Were there no desirous one" in a similar way [96a–96b]. These texts are similar with respect to their respective explanations of the refutation of the prior existence and nonexistence of the desirous one prior to desire. They differ with respect to their accounts of which passage accomplishes the refutation. This is due to the difference between their respective readings of the first of these two lines: One reads it with, and one without, a negation.

1.1.1.2 Refutation of the existence or nonexistence of desire prior to the desirous one

Suppose one said, "Although desire is refuted with respect to the prior existence or nonexistence of the desirous one, the desirous one, since it has not been refuted, exists essentially." **[147]**

> 2cd. With respect to the desirous one, whether or not desire exists,
> The analysis would be the same.

If the desirous one existed essentially, one could not escape two alternatives: Desire would have to either exist or not exist prior to it. This argument does not only apply to desire: The analysis refuting the existence or nonexistence of desire prior to the desirous one is similar to that refuting the existence or nonexistence of the desirous one prior to desire. Therefore the desirous one does not exist essentially.

They are similar in the following respect. If one thought that desire existed first, and the desirous one were thought of as existing thereafter, this could be refuted through the following rearrangement of the text:

> If prior to the desirous
> And without the desirous there were desire,
> Depending on that, the desirous one would exist.
> The desirous one would exist when there is desire.[1]

If the desire existed prior to the desirous one, there would be desire without a basis. Suppose someone maintained that the desirous one existed without the prior existence of desire. Since their simultaneity is refuted later, the only relevant thought is that the desirous is first and the desire comes later. In that case, we can apply the following rearrangement of the text:

1. This rearranged verse is taken from the *Buddhapālita* [183b].

> Were there no desire, moreover,
> Where would the desirous one be?[2]

If the desirous existed first, the arhat would also have to be desirous. With respect to this, Buddhapālita says that what is presented by the third line of the first verse has as its premise the fourth line.[3] This is because if desire comes first, it would make sense that this desire makes one desirous; if there were no desire, what would make him desirous? Having not been made desirous by desire, if someone nonetheless became desirous, then no one would be nondesirous. Therefore, he says, this explains that without desire it makes no sense that one is desirous. In response to someone saying that when there is desire there is a desirous one, he says, rearranging the text,

> Though desire exists,
> In what way does a desirous one exist? [183b]

Since, he explains, if the desirous one exists later, he would not have been made desirous by desire. **[148]** Therefore, though desire would exist, the desirous one would not make any sense. *Prajñāpradīpa* explains these two lines in the same way. [97a] Therefore, where in an older translation of these texts, there are negations in these two lines, it appears that some ignoramus has altered them.

Here, the appearance of the six lines beginning "If prior to the desirous" in these commentaries is a rearrangement of the text in order to explain that the same approach is taken to the desirous one, and thus this is not the original text. The master has not explicitly addressed everything that the commentaries present as similar to what has already been stated in this text—that which has been stated and that which is left unstated. That is, to make this more concise, had the master addressed this, there would have been no need for the commentators to explain it that way. So, in the old translations, after these six lines these are inserted:

> With respect to desire, whether or not the desirous one exists,
> The analysis would be the same.

They then inserted all eight into the root text, which is deplorable, because it contradicts the statement in the old editions that *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* has 449 verses and so it appears that it was adulterated. Because they insert the two lines "With respect to desire" into the treatise, it appears that they do not understand that the master—having already examined whether or not the desirous one exists prior to desire—stated explicitly that the refutation is to be

2. This rearranged verse is taken from the *Buddhapālita* [183b].

3. See *Buddhapālita* [183b] where the relation between the premise and conclusion is reversed. Tsong khapa follows Candrakīrti here. See *Prasannapadā* [46B].

applied *whether or not* desire exists prior the desirous one. Therefore it appears that someone has adulterated the treatise.

Thus, even Buddhapālita presents these two lines, though he does not comment on them [183a]. Since the condensed meaning of the commentary on the two lines "Though the desirous one exists" and the condensed meaning of the two lines "Though desire exists" are so similar they appear to have been inserted into later lines by someone else, **[149]** and therefore it is clear that this is a corrupted text.

Even in *Prajñāpradipa* [97a] and its two commentaries (*Tarkajvālā* and *Avalokitavrata*) these lines are inserted. However neither the commentary nor the subcommentary comment on them, and in the context they are incoherent and so seem to have been inserted by someone else. And in *Prasannapadā* they are not found. Through the fact that in *Akutobhaya* [*dB*u *ma* tsa 41b] these two are taken as part of the root text and appear to be commented on as well, the author shows his true colors. Since as corroboration it quotes Āryadeva's *Catuḥśataka* [*dBu ma* tsha 98a] it is insane to say that this is Nāgārjuna's text.[4]

1.1.2 Refutation of them existing simultaneously

Suppose someone says that the errors just demonstrated attach to the assertion that desire and the desirous one are sequential. However, in some contexts they arise simultaneously, because the desire that arises simultaneously with the mental state makes the state desirous, and since it is desirous the two exist essentially.

The refutation of this position has two sections: the refutation of their simultaneity through their independence and the refutation of their simultaneity through identity and difference.

1.1.2.1 Refutation of their simultaneity through their independence

> 3. Desire and the desirous one
> Cannot arise simultaneously.
> In that case desire and the desirous one
> Would not be mutually dependent.

If desire and the desirous one existed inherently, it would not make sense for them to arise simultaneously. This is because, if those existing inherently

4. Since Āryadeva was Nāgārjuna's disciple, Nāgārjuna would not be quoting him in an autocommentary. Hence this quotation indicates that the attribution of *Akutobhaya* to Nāgārjuna as an autocommentary is spurious.

came into existence simultaneously, they would not be mutually dependent, and so would be unrelated to each other. And in that case, being unrelated, they could arise without either causing the other. If these two existed inherently, they would have to be included either in the category of sequential or in that of simultaneous phenomena. When you refute the cogency of these categories, the refutation of sequence is easier, since it is not possible even conventionally. Simultaneity, on the other hand, because it exists conventionally, cannot be refuted without supplying a modifying term.[5]

Suppose they inherently existed simultaneously. Since you can refute their being related by mutual dependence, **[150]** they do *not* inherently arise simultaneously. This proves the essencelessness of these two.

1.1.2.2 Refutation of their simultaneity through identity and difference

This second part has two sections: the general refutation of their simultaneity with respect to identity and difference and the specific refutation of their being simultaneous while different.

1.1.2.2.1 General refutation of their simultaneity with respect to identity and difference

> 4. In identity there is no simultaneity.
> A thing is not simultaneous with itself.
> But if there is difference,
> Then how could there be simultaneity?

We now examine whether the desire and the desirous one that are maintained to be simultaneous have the same essence or different essences. If these two have the same essence, they cannot be simultaneous. After all, one and the same cow cannot be simultaneous with itself. On the other hand, if they have different essences, then how could they be simultaneous? They could not be, just as darkness and light or saṃsāra and nirvana are not seen to be simultaneous. This is also an argument that applies, *mutatis mutandis,* to things that are inherently different, whether or not they are simultaneous.

> 5. If a single thing were simultaneous[6]
> Then that could occur without accompaniment.

5. *Khyad par sbyar ba,* literally *to apply an attribute.*

6. In the context of the second half of this chapter, "Simultaneity" (*lhan cig*) must be understood as stronger than mere temporal coincidence, and to indicate spatio-temporal coincidence.

> If different things were simultaneous,
> Then that could occur without accompaniment.

Buddhapālita refutes this by reasoning that simultaneity and difference are opposites. This argument goes like this: If things are inherently different, they are disconnected from one another, whereas if they are simultaneous, they are not disconnected from one another. Therefore, simultaneity makes no sense, either in identity or in difference. The refutation of the idea that they are simultaneous—even though it makes no sense—goes as follows: If the pair, desire and the desirous one, although single, were simultaneous, then such things as a single unaccompanied cow would be simultaneous.

If, although they are inherently different, they were simultaneous, then such things as the unaccompanied cow, even though they are each hanging out alone, would each be individually simultaneous. The first argument presents reasons for the impossibility of simultaneity and the latter shows the incoherence of simultaneity [184a–185a].[7]

1.1.2.2.2 Specific refutation of their being simultaneous while different

This second section has three parts: the nonestablishment of simultaneity through the nonestablishment of difference, the non-necessity of establishing simultaneity when difference is established; and the presentation of mutual dependence when difference depends on simultaneity.

1.1.2.2.2.1 Nonestablishment of simultaneity through the nonestablishment of difference

[151] Suppose someone says, "Though it does not make sense for one thing to be simultaneous, one could posit different things as simultaneous."

> 6. If different things were simultaneous,
> How could desire and the desirous one,
> Be established as different?
> If they were, they would be simultaneous.

If one thought that desire and the desirous one, while inherently different, were simultaneous, then how would desire and the desirous one, not being

7. This entire argument is a close paraphrase of the relevant passage in the *Buddhapālita*.

mutually dependent, be established as different? "If they were"—if it were like that—these two "would be simultaneous." If it were like seeing, for instance, a horse and a cow not depending on one another, but established as different, they would be simultaneous. But desire and the desirous one are not different in the way that these are seen to be. Therefore these two are not inherently simultaneous. This also shows the similarity to the foregoing of the fact that if they were inherently simultaneous, they would be unrelated simultaneous things.

1.1.2.2.2.2 Non-necessity of establishing simultaneity when difference is established

> 7. If desire and the desirous one
> Were established as different,
> Then why would you imagine
> Their simultaneity?

Suppose you maintained that because when they are not established as different, simultaneity makes no sense, desire and the desirous one *are established* as inherently different. Why, in order to prove to others that these two exist inherently, do you imagine "their simultaneity"? What you imagine makes no sense! Here's why: The reason that it is imagined to be simultaneous is to establish the fact that in virtue of this desire, this desirous one desires this object. However, if they were inherently different, their being mutually dependent in this way would not make sense.

Buddhapālita says that although they are imagined to have the nature of simultaneity, one would thereby fall into the error of taking them to be different. Imagining them this way does not make sense [185a]. It would be like pouring water on something that has already burned up. *Prasannapadā* explains the meaning similarly. Therefore, one should not say that because if they were established as existing with *different* essences, they would thereby be established as existing with *essences*, that it makes no sense to supply their simultaneity as an intermediate premise [47b].

1.1.2.2.2.3 Presentation of mutual dependence when difference depends on simultaneity

> 8. Since they are not established as different,
> If you assert that they are simultaneous,
> In order to establish their simultaneity,
> Do you also assert their difference?

However, just in virtue of being different, they do not satisfy the mutual dependence necessary for saying that this one desires. **[152]** Therefore, suppose that in order to establish that satisfaction, one maintained their simultaneity. But, given mutually dependent simultaneity, it does not make sense for things that have different essences. Therefore, this would entail the error of asserting that they are the same thing. In order to establish their simultaneity, you have to maintain their difference. As Buddhapālita puts it so clearly, you sit wearing your cheap robe too tightly for fear of having it blown away by the wind. Then since you cannot bear its tightness, you loosen it [185a].[8]

> 9. Since the nature of difference has not been established,
> The nature of simultaneity cannot be established.
> In virtue of what nature of difference,
> Do you say that there is a nature of simultaneity?

So, is the nature of difference instantiated in individuals, or is difference instantiated in that which is simultaneous? The first case does not make sense, because it is not possible for there to be difference like this—where one could say of desire and the desirous one each individually that this is desire and this is desirous in virtue of that. In the second case, having explained that there is no inherent difference, it follows that inherently different things do not exist. Since they do not exist, the nature of simultaneity cannot be established, because that is posited only for different entities.

Buddhapālita asks, in that case, whether considered individually; or arisen together simultaneously; or as some random different entity you imagine, tell us, in what nature of inherent difference do you maintain that desire and the desirous one instantiate the nature of simultaneity? [185b][9]

1.2 Drawing conclusions from these arguments

Therefore we can conclude from the arguments advanced here that since desire and the desirous one are neither established as simultaneous—as occurring at the same time—nor as sequential—as not being simultaneous—the person or mind, which is the desirous one, the object of desire; and the desire, which is the instrument that makes one desirous, are all established as essentially empty.

8. This is a slight paraphrase of the *Buddhapālita*.
9. This is also a slight paraphrase of the *Buddhapālita*.

1.3 Application of these arguments to other phenomena [153]

10. Thus desire and the desirous one
 Cannot be established as simultaneous or as not simultaneous.
 So, like desire, no phenomena whatever
 Can be established as simultaneous or as nonsimultaneous.

Just as we have analyzed desire, all phenomena such as antipathy and the antipathetic one, confusion and the confused, etc., should as understood through these arguments to be neither established as simultaneous nor as nonsimultaneous, that is, as sequential. So we could rearrange the text as follows:[10]

If prior to antipathy
And without antipathy there were an antipathetic one,
Depending on that, antipathy would exist.
Antipathy would exist when there is an antipathetic one.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from the definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that definitive sūtras also establish that by means of the arguments analyzing desire, etc., all phenomena can be presented as essenceless and that this chapter explains all of the sūtras that demonstrate that such things as desire and the desirous one are essenceless.

The *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says:

> Youthful bodhisattva! The great bodhisattva who is skillful and who has developed insight into the entityless nature of all things does not develop desire, does not develop antipathy, does not develop confusion with regard to form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or any other phenomena. Why is that? Because he does not perceive things as real and because he does not objectify things. The agent of desire, the object of desire, the instrument of desire, the agent of antipathy, the object of antipathy, the instrument of antipathy, the agent of confusion, the object of confusion, the instrument of confusion: He does not perceive these phenomena as real. He does not objectify these phenomena. Since he does not perceive these things as real at all and does not objectify them, he does not develop desire towards

10. Buddhapālita also mentions the first verse as generalizable at [185B–186a], but this rearrangement of the verse is Tsong khapa's own.

> any of the three realms, and will quickly achieve this superior meditative state, and will quickly attain unsurpassable complete enlightenment. [*mDo sde* da 22b] **[154]**

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

It should be ascertained that if the three phenomena pertaining to affliction—the agent of desire, the object of desire, the instrument of desire—and the three phenomena pertaining to purification—the agent of confident reliance, the object of confident reliance, and the instrument of confident reliance—existed in the way they are grasped, as existing inherently, then as we have established through arguments, their conventional status would make no sense. Thereafter, dependent origination should be ascertained by realizing that since—while it is necessary to accord with convention—that would not be possible if phenomena existed inherently, their ontological status makes sense only as empty of essence. We could also accept this rearrangement: "The desirous one depends on desire."[11]

This is the commentary on the sixth chapter, having ten verses, called "the examination of desire and the desirous one."

11. This is probably a rearrangement of VII: 16cd.

CHAPTER VII

Examination of Arising, Enduring, and Ceasing

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Presentation of the opponent's view
  1.2 Its refutation
    1.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the characteristics of the produced
      1.2.1.1 Refutation of general characteristics
        1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of the three characteristics collectively
          1.2.1.1.1.1 Refutation by examining whether or not they are produced
          1.2.1.1.1.2 Refutation by examining whether they exist individually or collectively
          1.2.1.1.1.3 Refutation by examining whether or not they have other characteristics
            1.2.1.1.1.3.1 Presenting the reductio
            1.2.1.1.1.3.2 Rebutting the critique
              1.2.1.1.1.3.2.1 Rebutting the critique of the first reductio
                1.2.1.1.1.3.2.1.1 Setting out the critique
                1.2.1.1.1.3.2.1.2 Rebutting the critique
              1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2 Rebutting the critique of the second reductio
                1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.1 Setting out the critique
                1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2 Rebutting the critique
                  1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1 Refuting the example
                    1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1.1 Refuting through impugning the conclusion
                    1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1.2 Refutation through showing that the reasoning commits the fallacy of accident

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1.2.1 Presentation of the main point
1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1.2.2 Presentation of the corroboration of the previous explanations
1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1.2.3 Explanation of the meaning of the corroborative sūtras
1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.2 Refuting the object of the example
1.2.1.1.2 Refutation of each
1.2.1.1.2.1 Refutation of arising existing essentially
1.2.1.1.2.1.1 Refutation through examination with respect to the three temporal periods in which the thing is to be arisen
1.2.1.1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of arising in general and in particular
1.2.1.1.2.1.1.1.1 Common refutation of arising in the three temporal periods
1.2.1.1.2.1.1.1.2 Particular refutations of arising
1.2.1.1.2.1.1.2 Rebuttal of the argument against the refutation
1.2.1.1.2.1.1.2.1 Rebuttal of the argument against the refutation of arising existing in the three temporal periods
1.2.1.1.2.1.1.2.2 Rebuttal of the argument against the refutation of arising in that which is in the process of arising
1.2.1.1.2.1.1.3 Refuting while maintaining arising
1.2.1.1.2.1.2 Refutation through examination with respect to nonexistence, existence, or both
1.2.1.1.2.1.3 Refutation through examination of whether or not it is in the process of ceasing
1.2.1.1.2.2 Refutation of enduring existing essentially
1.2.1.1.2.2.1 Refutation through examination of the activity with respect to the three temporal periods
1.2.1.1.2.2.2 Refutation through the examination of whether or not it is in the process of ceasing
1.2.1.1.2.2.3 Refutation through the examination of whether or not there is another agent of enduring
1.2.1.1.2.3 Refutation of ceasing existing essentially
1.2.1.1.2.3.1 The mode of refutation through the analysis of cessation
1.2.1.1.2.3.1.1 Refutation through examination of the three temporal periods
1.2.1.1.2.3.1.2 Refutation through examination of whether or not it endures
1.2.1.1.2.3.1.3 Refutation through examination of the stages of self and others
1.2.1.1.2.3.1.3.1 The main point
1.2.1.1.2.3.1.3.2 Rebuttal of refutations
1.2.1.1.2.3.1.4 Refutation through examination of whether or not entities exist

We are in the section of the text explaining the refutation of the proof that there is a self of phenomena, and, having completed the first part of that section, which was the demonstration of selflessness in three phenomena, we are now in the second part of that section, which is the refutation of the argument that there is a self in phenomena. **[154:12]** This has three parts: We have finished the first part, which is the refutation of the defilements; and we now turn to the second part which is the refutation of the existence of the characteristics: arising, ceasing, and enduring; the third will be the refutation of the existence of the cause—agent and action. This part has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, confirmation by citations from definitive scriptures, and summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

This section has two parts: the presentation of the opponent's view and its refutation.

1.1 Presentation of the opponent's view

Here some say that the aggregates, elements, and the faculties—the produced—exist essentially, because their characteristic of being produced—their arising, etc.—do exist. The Teacher has also said, "Oh monks, these three are the characteristics of the produced: The arising of the produced is seen; the ceasing of the produced is seen; that which endures is also seen transforming" [*Saṁyuttanikāyāli, Khandhavagga, Ānandasūtra, Vol. II,* 792]. In the *Abhidharma* it is written, "Since arising, aging, enduring, and ceasing are said to be

non-psychophysical aggregates" [*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya mngon pa* ku 70a],[1] **[155]** most of our higher and lower schools maintain that they are non-psychophysical aggregates. Therefore, the arising, ceasing, and enduring of form, mind, and mental episodes are maintained to be non-psychophysical aggregates.

The Sautrāntikas and higher schools maintain them to be imputed entities and the Vaibhāṣikas maintain them to be substantial entities. Such characteristics as arising, in virtue of which such phenomena as material form are said to be produced are maintained by the Sautrāntikas and higher schools to be the activity of arising; the activity of ceasing; and the activity of enduring of those phenomena. The Vaibhāṣikas maintain, as we will explain later, that they are *agents* which *make* things arise, which *make* them endure, and which *make* them cease. On this latter view, when an aggregate, form for instance, is characterized as produced, it is not characterized by being arising, etc., but rather is characterized as having been produced by some other object. On the former view, it is not characterized like that.

When the Sautrāntikas refuted the claim that such things as form and such things as their arising are substantially different, the Vaibhāṣikas present the following counterargument: How can that very attribute which is the basis of the characteristic be the characteristic itself? In response to this the autocommentary to the *Abidharmakośa* explains: Although being composed by such things as a dewlap, or having such qualities as solidity, are not substantially different from the cow and the earth element, respectively, they are their characteristics. Arising, etc., are similar [*mNgon pa* ku 82b].

1.2 Its refutation

The refutation of essential existence with respect to characteristic and characterized has been explained in the fifth chapter. Therefore, here it is refuted through another argument which has three parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the characteristics of the produced; showing that thereby the essential existence of the unproduced is also refuted; and rebutting the view that this refutation contradicts scriptures.

1. *ldan min 'du byed*. These are compounded phenomena that are neither mental nor material. They include not only such things as characteristics and other universals, but such abstractions as persons, as opposed to the momentary phenomena on the basis of which they are imputed.

1.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the characteristics of the produced

The first part has two sections: the refutation of general characteristics **[156]** and the individual refutations of the particular characteristics.

1.2.1.1 Refutation of general characteristics

The first section has two subsections: the refutation of the three characteristics collectively and the refutation of each.

1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of the three characteristics collectively

This subsection has three parts: refutation by examining whether or not they are produced; refutation by examining whether they exist individually or collectively; and refutation by examining whether or not they have other characteristics.

1.2.1.1.1.1 Refutation by examining whether or not they are produced

1. If arising were produced
   It would also have the three characteristics.
   If arising were unproduced,
   How could it be the characteristic of the produced?

If it is maintained that arising is a characteristic of the produced, is *it* produced or unproduced? If arising were produced, then that arising would also have—that is, be associated with these three—the characteristics of arising, enduring, and ceasing which would be substantially different from it. This is because arising, enduring, and ceasing are inextricable from produced things and because it is maintained that such things as those that are produced must be characterized as produced by having arising, etc., where these are substantially different from them. If this is maintained, then one could apply this here also, by saying, "How could *arising* be the characteristic of the produced?" This is because arising is the basis of characteristics characterized by the characteristic that characterizes the produced. Therefore, it is not the characteristic characterizing such things as material form as the produced.

This does not demonstrate the error committed by saying, "In order for the earth element to be characterized by solidity, if solidity were the earth element, then the earth element would have to be characterized by another characteristic." Here is the reason for saying that—with regard to the produced being characterized by arising—if it were produced, there would have to be another characteristic characterizing it: When solidity characterizes its own basis of characteristic as the earth element, it characterizes it as inseparable from itself. When arising, on the other hand, characterizes the produced, it characterizes its basis of characteristic as something substantially different from itself.

By asking how, if arising were unproduced, it could be the characteristic of the produced, he means that it cannot be, just like space.[2] Candrakīrti notes [49a] that it is said in the commentary[3] [186b] that if one maintained that arising does not have these three characteristics, **[157]** then since it would be free from these three, one would have to maintain that it could not be the characteristic of the produced. However, just as Candrakīrti says later, this is the commentator's own argument, but not that of the author of the root text and so is incidental. Buddhapālita presents a different explanation: By saying "arising," enduring and ceasing are also indicated. And so we could rearrange the text to read "If enduring were produced, etc." [186b].

1.2.1.1.1.2 Refutation by examining whether they exist individually or collectively

2. The three, arising, etc., cannot function separately
As the characteristics of the produced.
But how could they be joined
In one thing simultaneously?

Let us continue the examination: If arising, etc., are thought to be the characteristics of the produced, are they separately characteristics or jointly characteristics? This is to ask whether arising, etc., individually and sequentially characterize or whether they jointly characterize. Arising and those indicated by "etc.," *viz.,* enduring and ceasing (these three)—separately—that is, individually—can not function as characteristics characterizing the produced. This is because if at the time of arising, neither enduring nor ceasing existed, the produced would be just like space, which has no arising. If at the time of enduring, neither arising nor ceasing existed, like a sky flower, the entity could

2. Tsong khapa, like most Buddhist philosophers, takes space to be permanent and unproduced.
3. Tsong khapa refers here to Candrakīrti's citation of the *Buddhapālita,* where this argument is presented.

not endure. If it endured in a second moment after the moment it came into existence, it would not cease thereafter as well, and if it ceased thereafter, then this would not make any sense—one thing being both permanent and impermanent. If at the moment of cessation, neither arising nor enduring existed, it would be without cessation, just like a sky flower.

The Vaibhāṣikas maintain that although the entities that are the bases of characteristics—form, etc.—have the four characteristics at the same time, the activities occur in order: First, there is the activity of arising; then the activity of enduring; then the activity of aging; then the activity of ceasing. In response to the Sautrāntikas' charge that this undermines their assertion of momentariness, the autocommentary to the *Abhidharmakośa* explains that the Vaibhāṣikas reply to this as follows: **[158]** We regard being momentary as having completed the four activities [*mNgon pa* ku 83a]. This is refuted here as follows: Since it would be contradictory for the characteristics—arising, etc.—to exist and not for each to engage in its respective activity, if one of these did not engage in its activity, it could not exist. Thus the Vaibhāṣikas commit these errors.

Even if the second position—that they characterize jointly—were maintained, this would not make sense. "How could they be" means that it does not make sense to say that arising, enduring, and ceasing "jointly"—that is, collectively—exist inherently in one entity at one time. Such a union would constitute an internal contradiction, just like being free from desire and being a desirous one and like light and darkness. While it would not be contradictory for these three to be jointly and simultaneously in a single basis conventionally, it would be contradictory for them so to exist inherently or ultimately. This is because if enduring existed through its own characteristic, it should remain in the second moment after that in which it has come into existence. Therefore since its cessation—its having ceased at the second moment—would not make sense, at the moment of enduring, there is no cessation of that which is ceasing. Therefore, at the time at which there is the activity of enduring, it would be contradictory for there to be the activity of cessation, just as in the case of light and dark.

If arising existed essentially, it would have to arise again and again. So, it would be contradictory for there to be the cessation of that which is ceasing at the time when it has the activity of arising. This is because if it is about to arise it is yet to happen, and if it is about to cease it is present. This is a refutation of the position of such schools as the Sautrāntikas—who regard arising, enduring and ceasing as having the nature of activities: regarding arising as the new emergence of a previously nonexistent thing, enduring as the homogeneous continuation of something previously existing, cessation as not remaining for a second moment, and aging as having a different characteristic from that one had a moment ago—and of those who regard all of these as existing simultaneously through their own characteristics. Regarding them as agents,

and maintaining that they engage in their activities simultaneously, **[159]** it is easier to understand that it is contradictory for them to engage in their actions. This is also presented, but in a different way, by Buddhapālita [see 187a, ff.].

1.2.1.1.1.3 Refutation by examining whether or not they have other characteristics

The third section has two parts: presenting the reductio and rebutting the critique of the reductios.

1.2.1.1.1.3.1 Presenting the reductio

> 3. If arising, enduring, and ceasing
> Had characteristics other than those of the produced,
> There would be an infinite regress.
> If they do not, they would not be produced.

Do arising, etc., have other characteristics or not? What would the error be if one maintained, as was said earlier, that they have other characteristics? And what would the error be if there are no other characteristics? Suppose that arising, enduring, and ceasing have characteristics, substantially other than themselves, characterizing them as produced. In that case, it would have to be imagined that they have some other characteristics, and an infinite regress would ensue. If this were maintained, one would have to accept that the original characteristics could never be established. If, on the other hand, these three did not have characteristics substantially other than themselves, these three would not be produced. This is because in order to be characterized as produced, such things as material form would have to be characterized by characteristics that are substantially different from themselves.

Suppose one asked why—since we have already presented a critique that applies whether or not arising, etc., are said to have different characteristics—we are repeating that demonstration here? The previous critique—that if it did not have other characteristics, it would be unproduced—is presented by the commentator (Candrakīrti), but is not presented by the master (Nāgārjuna). Nor has the master explicitly said that if they do not have other characteristics that they could not be characteristics of the produced. Although the basic meaning is similar, the mode of critique is different from that of the previous critique. Therefore this is not redundant. Moreover, while the previous one only developed the critique with regard to arising, since it is the primary one, here the critique is developed with regard to all three of them and therefore there is a difference. Saying "If they do not, they would not be produced," **[160]** he

shows that if they did not have other characteristics they would not be produced, while previously, he showed that if arising was not produced, it could not be the characteristic of the produced, and so it is not repetitive. On the other hand, the commentary using the word "or" presents three alternative interpretations,[4] and in this way also shows that it is not repetitive. While these are many ways of showing that it is not repetitive, this "or" does not indicate uncertainty regarding the meaning of the text. Therefore this "or" should be understood in a similar way in other contexts as well [49b–50a].

1.2.1.1.1.3.2 Rebutting the critique

This second section comprises two subsections: rebutting the critique of the first reductio and rebutting the critique of the second reductio.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.1 Rebutting the critique of the first reductio

This first subsection has two parts: setting out the critique; and rebutting the critique.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.1.1 Setting out the critique

4. The arising of arising only gives rise
To the basic arising.
The arising of the basic arising
Gives rise to the arising of arising as well.

The Sammitīya maintain that since arising, etc., have the arising of arising, etc., the absurd consequence that they are unproduced does not follow. There is no infinite regress, because the basic characteristic and the derivative characteristics produce each other. When either a virtuous or an afflicted produced phenomenon arises, it, as well as fifteen phenomena, arise: that phenomenon, its arising, its association, its enduring, its aging, its impermanence, and if that phenomenon is afflicted, its being obstructive to liberation; if it is virtuous, its being conducive to liberation; if it is conducive to renunciation, its being conducive to renunciation; and if is not conducive to renunciation, its not being conducive to renunciation. This phenomenon, whether virtuous or afflicted, is the principal one; the five from its arising to its impermanence and the first

4. Tsong khapa just means that this word separates Candrakīrti's interpretations, indicating that they are alternative readings, not that they indicate any doubt about how to understand this passage.

or last member of each of the two pairs—being obstructive to liberation, etc.—whichever applies, these seven are the subordinate ones. The seven, from the arising of arising to the nonconduciveness to renunciation of the nonconducive to renunciation, are the subordinates of the subordinates. "Renunciation" and "nonrenunciation" mean, respectively, the renunciation or nonrenunciation of cyclic existence.

The arising of arising only gives rise **[161]** to the basic arising. The basic arising gives rise to the arising of arising. The word "as well" includes the other thirteen attributes, excluding the phenomenon itself, and thus it gives rise to fourteen. Similarly, each of the six, from the basic association to being nonconducive to renunciation, acts on each of the fourteen, from association to being nonconducive to renunciation, excluding itself. Each of the six—from the derivative association to the derivative being nonconducive to renunciation—acts as follows: The derivative association only makes the basic association *association; mutatis mutandis* for each pair up to the derivative not being conducive to renunciation and the basic not being conducive to renunciation. To not be conducive to renunciation is to be not conducive to attaining nirvana.

This classification of fifteen phenomena is presented in all three of the great commentaries. In *Prajñāpradīpa* it is explained that the Vātsiputrīya school maintains this [103a]. The presentation in the *Abhidharmakośa* is according to the system of the Kashmiri Vaibhāṣikas [II: 46, commentary at *mNgon pa* ku 81a]. That is, the nine: the four—arising, enduring, aging, and ceasing—and the derivative four characteristics, including the phenomenon itself, are acted upon by these: each of the four basic phenomena—arising, etc.—acts upon all of the eight phenomena, with the exception being the phenomenon itself. And each of the four—the arising of arising, etc.—are acted upon by each of the basic characteristics.

According to the Sammītyas' system as well, the derivative characteristics act upon each of the phenomena. However, on their view, the basic characteristics act upon the fourteen phenomena. When presenting the opponent's position, their account of such things as association should also be presented. Intending to show that the refutation of the mutual establishment of the characteristics is equally applicable to the mutual establishment of association, etc., the way that these are mutually established is presented as the opponent's view.

Here some maintain the following: In the *Abhidharmakośa*, when it says that that one phenomenon acts upon eight and that the derivative phenomenon acts upon only one [II: 47], aging is counted separately, and here "aging" is defined as enduring while getting old, and so aging is included under enduring. Therefore, the *Commentary*'s [50a] explanation of phenomenon and the fifteen it is not consistent with the root text. **[162]** This is just rejecting the whole having only seen a part.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.1.2 Rebutting the critique

5. If, as you say, the arising of arising
   Gives rise to the basic arising,
   How, according to you, does this,
   Not arisen from the basic arising, give rise to that?

If it is your position that that arising of arising gives rise to the basic arising, how could the arising of arising to which the basic arising did not previously give rise in turn give rise to the basic arising? It could not, because on your view, the basic arising would have to give rise to the arising of arising.

6. If, as you say, that which is arisen from basic arising
   Gives rise to the basic arising,
   How does that basic arising, to which it has not given
   rise,
   Give rise to it?

If in your system you say that the arising arisen from the basic arising gives rise to the basic arising, then how could the basic arising, not previously arisen from the arising of arising, give rise to arising? It could not, because the basic arising would have to be arisen from the arising of arising! Therefore, since it makes no sense for two to establish each other, the infinite regress remains.

Suppose you say that although these two, having arisen earlier, do not give rise to each other, these two in the process of arising give rise to each other.

7. If this non-arisen
   Could give rise to that,
   Then you will have to accept
   Things in the process of arising giving rise to each other.

If one non-arisen thing could give rise to another non-arisen thing, both, each of which is in the process of arising, would have to give rise to each other, and you would have to accept that. If that is so, such things as the sprout, which are in the process of arising, are not yet come about. Therefore, since they have not yet arisen, it does not make sense that they could give rise to others. Thus this method of presenting the refutation of arising and the arising of arising is merely an instance, and so, the six—enduring, etc.—must be refuted by substituting the subjects.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2 Rebutting the critique of the second reductio

This second part has two parts: setting out the critique and rebutting the critique.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.1 Setting out the critique

Suppose that now they say, "From such an assertion, an infinite regress follows. Arising, etc., do not have any other characteristics, but without them they would not become unproduced."[5] How does this go?

> 8. Just as a butterlamp
> Illuminates itself as well as others,
> So arising gives rise both to itself
> And to other things.

One might say, "Just as, for example a butterlamp, as it has the nature of illumination, illuminates itself and other things, such as pots, in the same way, arising, as it has the nature of arising, **[163]** gives rise both to itself and to others."

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2 Rebutting the critique

This second part has two sections: refuting the example and refuting the object of the example.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1 Refuting the example

The first part has two sections: refuting through impugning the conclusion and refutation through showing that the reasoning commits the fallacy of accident.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1.1 Refuting through impugning the conclusion

> 9. In the butterlamp and its place
> There is no darkness.

5. Here there is a distortion of Candrakīrti's Sanskrit text through a corrupt Tibetan translation at [51a]. The Tibetan reads *Gang las thug pa med par thad bar 'gyur ba/skye ba la ni skye ba gzhan yod pa ma yin te//*. The Sanskrit has a clear premise–conclusion relation, which is not represented in the Tibetan due a transposition in the sentence. It reads *naiva hi utpādasyāpara utpādo'sti yato'navasthāprasaṅgaḥ syāt*. Tsong khapa's commentary reflects this misreading of *Prasannapadā*, which should read: Suppose they replied, "Since there would be an infinite regress, arising does not have a further arising."

> What then does the butterlamp illuminate?
> For illumination is the clearing of darkness.

Illumination is the clearing of darkness. In the butterlamp, which has become an illuminator in virtue of clearing darkness, there is no darkness, because that would be contradictory. The purpose of "and" is to conjoin the first and second bases of the absence of darkness presented. In the spot where the butterlamp that illuminates others through clearing darkness is placed, and where the light reaches, there is no darkness. So, what can the butterlamp illuminate? Itself or others? Neither!

If the butterlamp did not clear darkness essentially, it would not make sense to say that there is no darkness in the place where its light reaches. This is because only by the clearing of darkness by a butterlamp that is in the process of arising would darkness be cleared in the butterlamp and in the place where its light reaches. This in turn is because if the butterlamp did not clear darkness, such things as pots would not be seen even when it is burning, just as when it is not burning.

Suppose one says that since the butterlamp has the property of illumination—the clearing of darkness—that is done by the butterlamp that is in the process of arising.

> 10. If the arising butterlamp
> Does not contact darkness,
> How could that arising butterlamp
> Have cleared the darkness?

Light and darkness cannot exist simultaneously in one place, so they cannot contact each other. Given that the arising butterlamp and darkness do not contact each other in virtue of their own characteristics, it does not make sense to inquire, "How"—that is, by what means—"does the arising butterlamp clear darkness in virtue of its own characteristic?" Conventionally, while one can maintain that butterlamps clear darkness, the butterlamp in the process of arising and darkness must then make contact. However, **[164]** since at the time the butterlamp is in the process of arising there is no butterlamp, it can make no contact with darkness.

According to those who maintain that the butterlamp clears darkness in virtue of its own characteristic, if the butterlamp in the process of arising and darkness made contact, at that time the butterlamp would have to exist. However, since it does not, this is the argument that shows that it makes no sense for the butterlamp to clear darkness, since the butterlamp in the process of arising does not make contact with it.

Suppose one thought that just as wisdom dispels ignorance without making contact with it, and the eye sees material form without making contact with

it, and the magnet attracts metal without making contact with it, the butterlamp also clears darkness without making contact with it.

> 11. If, without making contact,
> The butterlamp clears darkness,
> All of the darkness remaining in the world
> Should be cleared by that which is placed here.

Well, then, suppose that you said that although the butterlamp and darkness do not make contact, the butterlamp clears darkness through its own characteristic. In that case, the butterlamp placed here should clear the darkness remaining all over the world, just like the darkness near the lamp. One would then have to understand that the same argument applies to such things as the dispelling of ignorance by wisdom, *mutatis mutandis.*

This is an argument that shows that if the clearer and the cleared existed through their own characteristic, there would be no determinate property here. Therefore, if it clears any, it should clear all; if it does not clear all, it should not clear any. This is similar to the reductio that shows that if arising existed through its own characteristic, then anything could arise from anything.

Suppose one said that no error has been committed, because although they do not make contact, such things as the magnet attract, etc., only those things that are in the right place. However, if they do not make contact, then there is no way to establish whether or not they are in the right place. Therefore it is just like the foregoing!

Suppose someone says instead that in everyday life, without making contact, one can see the difference between being cleared and not being cleared, being attracted and not being attracted, etc. We reply that through engaging in an analysis into whether or not things make contact, you assert such things as that there is illumination in the butterlamp in a way that they are *not* seen in everyday life. This is because **[165]** in everyday life it is maintained, without engaging in any such analysis, that the butterlamp clears darkness, that the eye sees material form, etc. This can also be explained as follows: although ordinary people may see things that way, since ordinary people are not authoritative with respect to an analysis into the way things really are, this is not thereby discredited.

All of these responses refute the position that such claims as that the butterlamp clears darkness and that the eye sees form withstand analysis. Since that is not ordinarily maintained, we are not contradicting the way that ordinary people see things. Moreover, this is refutation of views according to which things exist ultimately and since ordinary perception is not authoritative with respect to the way things really are, although they see things this way, this does not undermine authoritative perception. Therefore, this shows that if it were ultimately established that the butterlamp clears darkness and the magnet attracts metal, etc.; then this reductio is projected: Since they are equally not in

contact, there is no way to distinguish between clearing and not clearing, etc. However, it is not projected in general.[6] Therefore, even though it does not make sense, with respect to mundane nominal practices that are accepted conventionally, to engage in analysis using arguments analyzing the mode of existence, if instead you are examining whether or not something exists ultimately, you have to engage in analytic investigation because if you do not, the irrational position that things exist ultimately would be asserted. The analysis in question is not one that does not analyze a fact, without a concern to analyze reality, such as an inquiry into how the seer and the seen actually exist, as for instance, when an ordinary person asks, "Have you seen or not seen **X**?" or "Has the magnet attracted metal or not?" It is instead an inquiry into whether or not phenomena actually exist inherently.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1.2 Refutation through showing that the reasoning commits the fallacy of accident

This second subsection has three parts: the presentation of the main point; presentation of the corroboration of the previous explanations, and explanation of the meaning of corroborative sūtras.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1.2.1 Presentation of the main point

12. If the butterlamp
Illuminates itself and others,
Darkness should, without a doubt,
Conceal itself and others.

If, because of having the nature of illumination, the butterlamp illuminates two objects—itself and others[7]—**[166]** then darkness, having the nature of concealment should, without a doubt, conceal two objects—itself and others. If darkness concealed itself, darkness would not be seen, just like a pot. Therefore, in neither of the two truths does darkness conceal itself or the butterlamp illuminate itself. The concealment of other things by darkness and the illumination of others by the butterlamp exist conventionally, but not ultimately.

6. That is, the reductio in question is restricted to the case where things are claimed to be ultimately established.

7. Both Tashi Lhunpo [97a] and Lhasa [97b] actually read *rang bzhin gi dngos po*, but we are reading this as *rang gzhin gi dngos po*, as this is consistent with the remainder of the text, with the corresponding passage in *Prasannapadā* [52b], and with the remainder of the sentence in which it figures which provides a parallel construction, as well as with the corresponding verse.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1.2.2 Presentation of the corroboration of the previous explanations

In the *Upālipariprcchā-sūtra* it says,

> The compassionate one taught in this way:
> In accord with this beautiful doctrine,
> Abandon lay life and take ordination
> And achieve the supreme fruit.
>
> Having ordained and having left lay life,
> Although having achieved all of the fruits as well,
> If you take the measure of the nature of phenomena,
> Neither the fruits nor the achievement of the fruits exists.
>
> Oh, the unsurpassed compassionate victor,
> Through extremely eloquent reasoning
> Showed the marvelous fact that
> Nonetheless, astonishingly, the fruits are achieved. [*dKon brtsegs* ca 130a]

This says that if you examine essence, although when examined neither the fruits to be obtained nor the person who obtains it nor his obtaining of it exists, the marvelous thing is that there is achievement of the fruit. It is said that thinking this way, one develops great respect for the Victor. To achieve the fruits means to have contact with them, and since contact does not exist inherently, this is the basis of setting out the account of achievement and contact.

According the *Ratnakūṭa sūtra,*

> Suppose, for example, someone in a house thinks
> "After a long while I'll blow this butterlamp out."
> He will not think, "I have stayed here in
> The darkness for a long time and I won't leave here."
>
> When the butterlamp is blown out,[8] there is no power **[167]**
> To make the darkness nonexistent in the shadows.
> Depending on the butterlamp the darkness becomes nonexistent.
> So one is not obsessed with the emptiness of either. [*dKon brtsegs* cha 134a]

Thus it presents an example that shows that both illumination and darkness are essentially empty, and the coherence of the system of clearer and cleared as well, and applying this to the present matter it continues,

8. Translating *byung* as to *blow out* for both consistency and as per the Sanskrit *vigacchanāya,* Sanskrit edition of *Prasannapadā,* p. 64.

In the same way, depending on the uncontaminated Āryan insight,
The afflictions of ignorance will not be accumulated.
Insight and affliction never[9]
Co-occur even for a moment.

Although insight does not intend to dispel ignorance,
Depending on insight the ignorance becomes nonexistent.
Neither of them is perceived, like a sky flower.
In the same way, both insight and ignorance are empty. [Ibid.]

The quotations cited as scriptural sources for the emptiness of essence of the butterlamp's clearing of darkness are sufficient. However, the matter to which the analogy is to be applied according to these quotations is explained as follows: The meaning of these quotations is that the mode of abandoning afflictions through the antidote should be understood in the same way as the clearing of darkness by the butterlamp.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.1.2.3 Explanation of the meaning of the corroborative sūtras

Suppose one asked, if the elimination of that which is to be eliminated by the antidote "insight" is similar to the clearing of darkness by the butterlamp, in what way are they similar? In one place, the arising light—that which is about to arise—and the darkness which is about to cease are simultaneous. Therefore the arisen light and the ceased darkness are simultaneous. Therefore, at that very place, when the butterlamp is lit, although there is no darkness to be the object of its clearing, it would not be contradictory for the butterlamp to be the clearer of darkness, just as it is not contradictory for the later moment not to exist in the previous moment, even though the previous moment gives rise to it. Similarly, in a single personal continuum, the simultaneous nonexistence of the antidote—the uncontaminated insight—and its object of elimination is presented by saying "They do not co-occur even for a moment." "Depending on insight the ignorance becomes nonexistent" means that nonetheless it is not contradictory for the antidote **[168]** to eliminate the object of elimination.

Therefore, although the unobstructed path of seeing and the object of elimination of the path of seeing do not exist simultaneously in a single personal continuum, that path is already in the process of eliminating the object of elimination. It is similar with respect to the elimination of the object of elimination of the path of meditation by the unobstructed path of meditation.

9. Reading *rtag* for *brtag*, following the Sanskrit (*Prasannapadā*, p. 64) despite what are clearly scribal errors in Lhasa (98a) and Tashi Lhunpo (97b).

Suppose someone argues as follows: When the antidote—the uncontaminated, unobstructed path—is arisen, if the corresponding object of elimination did not exist, then it would not make sense to say "depending on insight the ignorance becomes nonexistent." This is because at the moment of insight, the object of elimination has already become nonexistent. Here, since the antidote and the object of elimination on the one hand, and light and darkness on the other, are said to be similar, their respective antidotes which are about to arise, and their respective objects of elimination, which are about to cease, exist simultaneously. Therefore, the arisen antidote and the ceased object of elimination are simultaneous.

In contrast, during the unobstructed path, the object of elimination *is not* eliminated, but on the path of liberation it *is* eliminated. Therefore it makes sense to say that in dependence on the antidote, the object of elimination becomes nonexistent. This is because dependent upon the antidote—the unobstructed path—the path of liberation—which has eliminated the object of elimination—arises.

Suppose instead that you regarded the mere nonexistence of the object of elimination during the path as its having been eliminated. But the appearance of the object of elimination of the path of *seeing* at the time of the path of *practice* is impossible; when the path of *seeing* is manifest, the appearance of the object of elimination of the path of *meditation* is impossible. Therefore, it would follow that they would have to have been eliminated.

In that case, although during the final stage of the Mahāyāna path of meditation, there is not even the smallest of the small latent potentialities for the object of elimination of the path of meditation, the elimination of the corresponding object of elimination is achieved during the path of liberation and that is the first moment of omniscient wisdom. The subtle dysfunctional latent potentials are deleted only at the stage of buddhahood, **[169]** but are not deleted earlier. This also refers to their elimination.

To have abandoned is to have eliminated the objects of elimination of the path of seeing and the path of meditation in one's continuum in such a way that they will never recur. For that it is necessary to have the antidote for the seed of the object of abandonment earlier. This is because, as we have seen earlier, the path of liberation, having already accomplished elimination, must have done so by means of that antidote.

The object of abandonment and the antidote are mutually exclusive in the sense that they cannot be co-present. The sense in which they cannot be co-present is not that in which heat and cold cannot coexist continuously. Rather, it is like that in which light and darkness cannot coexist simultaneously. Therefore the antidote—the uncontaminated unobstructed path—and its object of elimination cannot both be present in a single continuum at the same time.

Well, then, suppose one thought as follows: Although during the unobstructed path of the path of seeing, the object of elimination of the path of seeing is not present, the latent potential for the object of elimination of the path of meditation must exist. At that time, the mental consciousness is uncontaminated, unaffected by the potential for erroneous dualistic appearance. Thus, it is unreasonable to say that the latent potentiality is in its nature. Moreover, the sensory consciousnesses are not those on which it is grounded; form also cannot be the ground; the foundation consciousness is also not accepted. Therefore it is without a basis.

There is no error here. Here is how it goes. In the system that accepts the foundation consciousness, the basis that is objectified by the afflicted mind with the aspect of self-grasping is the basis for the potential for affliction. In the same way, for the Prāsaṅgika system, which does not accept the foundation consciousness, on the path of meditation, the basis of the latent potential for the object of elimination of the path of meditation is the mere basis of positing the designation of self. That is also the mere self posited on the basis of the mental continuum, or the mere person.

Suppose one thought as follows: The *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says:

> That which saturates the mental continuum, stains it and drives it is the potentiality. [*dBu ma* 'a 342b]

Thus it explains that the mental continuum is the basis of the potentiality. **[170]** The person is not the mental continuum. Therefore it does not make sense for it to be the basis of the potentialities. But there is no error here. Just as it is not contradictory to regard the person as seeing material form when the mind of that person sees material form, it is not contradictory both to regard his mental continuum as the basis of the potentialities and to regard the person posited thereupon as the basis of the potentialities.

The basis of the potential for such things as the object of elimination of the path of seeing should be understood in this way. The previous opponent presented one argument to establish the existence of the foundation consciousness. Through the way this argument was refuted, the refutations of the others can be inferred.

1.2.1.1.1.3.2.2.2.2 Refuting the object of the example

> 13. How could this arising, being non-arisen,
> Give rise to itself?
> And if it is arisen from something arisen,
> Having arisen, what is there to arise?

Moreover, if this arising gives rise to itself, is it given rise to by something not already arisen or by something already arisen? In the first case, if this arising is not arisen, how could it give rise to itself? It cannot, because otherwise a sky flower could also give rise to itself. If, already arisen, it gives rise to itself, since it is already arisen, what is there to which to give rise again? There is not anything to arise. Therefore, the arising does not give rise to itself.

If it does not give rise to itself, it must have another characteristic. But if this is the case, one cannot avoid an infinite regress. However, if one says that it neither gives rise to itself nor does another give rise to it, then it would be unproduced. As *Prajñāpradīpa* and its commentary explain, it stands to reason that if there is no need for it to arise again,[10] you would still have to say that it is nonproduced [256b ff.]. Therefore, the common refutation of the three characteristics ends here.

Because the refutation of the other two obviously begins here, the refutation of each individually begins from "The arisen and the non-arisen." Therefore, although up to this point, when refuting the critique of the reductio in terms of both the existence and nonexistence of other characteristics, only arising has been discussed; thereby the refutation of the critique of the reductio in terms of the other two should be understood. **[171]**

1.2.1.1.2 Refutation of each

The second section has three parts: refutation of arising existing essentially; the refutation of enduring existing essentially; and the refutation of ceasing existing essentially.

1.2.1.1.2.1 Refutation of arising existing essentially

This section has three parts: the refutation through examination with respect to the three temporal periods in which the thing is to be arisen; the refutation through examination with respect to nonexistence, existence, or both; and the refutation through examination of whether or not it is ceasing.

10. The phrase *med na* in this context is not at all clear. It may even be an early textual intrusion, although it occurs in both Lhasa [100a] and Tashi Lhunpo [99b]. Moreover though the connection between this argument and that in the *Prajñāpradīpa* [256 ff.] is tenuous, it does support reading the *med na* as referring to the "no need to arise again." On the other hand, *med na* could mean, *if it is nonexistent . . .*

1.2.1.1.2.1.1 Refutation through examination with respect to the three temporal periods in which the thing is to be arisen

This section has three parts: the refutation of arising in general and in particular, rebuttal of the argument against the refutation, and refuting while maintaining arising.

1.2.1.1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of arising in general and in particular

This section has two parts: common refutation of arising in the three temporal periods and particular refutations of arising.

1.2.1.1.2.1.1.1.1 Common refutation of arising in the three temporal periods

14. The arisen, the non-arisen, and that which is in the process of arising
Do not arise in any way at all.
Thus they are explained
Through the gone, the not-gone, and the going.

Arising does not give rise to something other than itself. The reason is that the three—the arisen (that in which the activity of arising has ceased) and the non-arisen (that in which the activity of arising has not begun) and that which is in the process of arising—are not arisen in any way. This has been explained in the second chapter in the refutation of the gone, the not-gone, and the going: There is no activity of going in the already-gone, because the past and present are mutually exclusive. In the same way, there is also no activity of arising in that which has already arisen and ceased, because the past and present are mutually exclusive. Just as it says that the there is no activity of going in the not-yet-gone and the not-yet-come because the future and the present are mutually exclusive, that in which the activity of arising has not yet started—that which is not yet arisen—has no activity of arising because the present and the future are mutually exclusive. Just as going has no activity of going, because apart from the gone and the not-gone going is not perceived, an entity in the process of arising does not have arising, because apart from the arisen and the non-arisen there is no arising.

Here, as was explained previously with respect to going, in general **[172]**

the arisen and the non-arisen are mutually exclusive; nonetheless, arising is not refuted just on this ground. This is because the "arisen, the non-arisen" according to the two analyses undertaken and *these* "arisen, non-arisen" must have the same meaning. According to the *Commentary,* those two are explained as having arisen and ceased and as not yet having come into being, respectively [53a–53b]. Therefore, since the present arising—which is neither arisen and ceased nor that in which there is not yet the activity of arising—exists conventionally, this means that, apart from the past and the future, arising does not exist inherently.

Suppose it is maintained that the activity of arising is in an arising entity which is neither of these two. This can be refuted by recasting the argument refuting the activity of going in that which is being gone over. Suppose for example that an arising sprout arises. Through having what kind of activity of arising is it the case that it is arising? Through having what kind of activity of arising is it posited as the agent of arising? After all, the activity of arising must be grounded in these two bases. But there is only one activity. Since it makes no sense for a single entity existing inherently to be grounded on each of two bases, if either the word "agent" or the word "action" has a referent, the other must be devoid of reference. If one maintained that both have reference, since there would be two activities of arising, there would have to be two sprouts as agents. Both masters apply this passage to refute arising giving rise to something other than itself. Although the previous example of the butterlamp refutes its object—giving rise both to oneself and to others—it does not work to apply it as a common refutation.

1.2.1.1.2.1.1.1.2 Particular refutations of arising

Suppose one said: Only arising arises, but not the arisen or the non-arisen. It is not that apart from the arisen and the non-arisen there is no arising. This is because the thing that has the activity of arising is called that which is in the process of arising, and so there is arising as well. In that case, since in dependence on arising that which is in the process of arising exists, **[173]** only that which is in the process of arising arises and that arising also gives rise to it.

> 15. When there is arising,
> That which is in the process of arising comes into existence. But
> when there is not,
> How can you say that that which is in the process of arising
> Depends on this arising?

"When there is arising": Those who say that since in dependence on the activity of arising that which is in the process of arising would exist inherently, and so "that which is in the process of arising" "comes into existence"—that

is, arises—must also be able to demonstrate the moment of being in the process of arising, saying "*this* sprout, which is in the process of arising, etc., exists in dependence on *this* arising of the sprout, etc. However, this is impossible, because, since at that time they are not yet arisen, there is no evidence to demonstrate. Therefore, since at that moment such things as the sprout in the process of arising do not exist, their activity of arising cannot exist inherently. How, then, could one say that the sprout in the process of arising exists essentially in dependence on the activity of arising? It would be irrational to say this.

1.2.1.1.2.1.1.2 Rebuttal of the argument against the refutation

This section has two parts: the rebuttal of the argument against the refutation of arising existing in the three temporal periods and the rebuttal of the argument against the refutation of arising in that which is in the process of arising.

1.2.1.1.2.1.1.2.1 Rebuttal of the argument against the refutation of arising existing in the three temporal periods

Our own schools say, "Alas, you who are pretending to represent the teachings of the Victor are merely skilful in refuting the views of others. We worry about you, who disparage the ultimate truth, which is dependent origination, as presented by the teacher. This is because the Tathāgata has demonstrated the way entities really exist through refuting the assertions that essence and an omnipotent god are creators by saying, "When this exists, that will come to be," etc. When *you* say such things as

> The arisen, the nonarisen and that which is arising
> Do not arise in any way at all, [14ab]

etc., you thereby refute that, murdering the mother—dependent arising—which gives birth to the victors. This is all we have to say in arguing with a nihilist like you."

This is an argument advanced by those who interpret the previous arguments as refuting the presentation of the agents and actions of arising **[174]** as causes and effects in the system of dependent arising. To this we say:

> 16. Whatever is dependently arisen,
> That thing is essentially peaceful.
> Therefore that which is in the process of arising and arising itself
> Are themselves peaceful.

I am not the one who destroys the mother of the victors (dependent origination). *You* are the one who is bereft of the aspiration toward the profound

dependent origination. Therefore, having grasped it the wrong way, you condemn us. This is because when the Teacher said, "This comes to be in dependence on that," he taught clearly that all phenomena are essenceless. This is because whatever is dependently arisen is peaceful—that is, devoid of essential existence and thus empty. Thus if entities existed through their essence, they should, inherently, retain their essences without degeneration. Thus, since they would not be dependent on anything else, their arising should not occur. Therefore, so long as one asserts that entities exist essentially, how can there be dependent origination? Therefore, when *you* maintain that entities have essence you impugn the dependent origination of all things. Consequently, you undermine your capacity to see the Buddha and the Dharma, because it is said in the scriptures that whoever sees dependent arising thereby sees the Dharma and whoever sees the Dharma sees the Buddha.

As for us, we say that depending on the seed as a cause, the sprout as an effect arises. When both of these are shown to be dependently originated, peaceful and devoid of essence, the mother of the victors—dependent origination—is completely clarified. Whatever is dependently arisen is essentially peaceful. Therefore, just in virtue of being dependently arisen, the essential existence of both that which is in the process of arising and arising itself are pacified.[11]

It should be understood, that as *Prasannapadā* responds through this kind of argument [53B], not only should the refutatory arguments **[175]** not be taken as undermining the system of dependent arising and cause and effect even the slightest bit, but instead they present this system with great clarity, and consequently it confirms dependent origination. This is because that something is dependently originated is a premise from which we can refute that it exists inherently.

In the *Anavatapta-sūtra* it says

> Whatever is arisen from conditions is non-arisen.
> There is no inherent arising in that.
> Whatever is dependent on conditions is explained to be empty.
> Whoever understands emptiness is mindful.[12]

Thus through the premise that something is arisen from conditions, its essential arising is refuted. The meaning of the phrase "non-arisen" in the first line is explained in the second line with the phrase "no inherent arising." Thus to refute arising, the object of negation is supplied in the modifying phrase. Since the third line explains the meaning of "essentially empty" as *being de-*

11. In this passage, Tsong khapa is using *zhi ba* in two senses—to mean *devoid of* as well as *peaceful*.

12. This Tibetan translation is slightly different from that found in Narthang and sDe dge editions [sDe dge *mDo sde* pha 230b, Narthang *mDo sde* na 355b], but there is no difference in sense.

pendent on conditions, it shows that *being essentially empty* is the meaning of "being dependently originated," but not *being empty of being able to perform a function.*

The *Sūtra-samuccaya* says

> O, Lord! Since all phenomena are dependently arisen, there is no entity. O, Lord! Whatever pertains to samsara or to nirvana is a dependently arisen object, meaning nonexistent. O, Lord! The meaning of "nonexistent" is understood by the wise as *dependently arisen.* But the wise do not conceptualize the meaning of "nonexistence" as *dependently arisen.* [*dBu ma* ki 200b]

One should understand this as quoted from the *Ratnasañcaya-sūtra.*[13] The meaning of the last line of this passage is that the *fact* that the meaning of "dependently arisen" is *essentially empty* is *also* conventionally the case; and so the meaning is that even *that* is not conceptualized as truly existent. Thus nonexistence is not *complete* non existence, but non existence of *inherent existence.* **[176]** Therefore, the entire system of cause and effect is coherent. For those who do not distinguish between *absence of inherent* existence and *non*-existence,[14] for things to be essentially empty would mean that *no* system is possible, not that things are dependently originated. Therefore, one should make an attempt to understand the finest argument concerning dependent origination.

1.2.1.1.2.1.1.2.2 Rebuttal of the argument against the refutation of arising in that which is in the process of arising

Suppose one said, "To say 'if that arising existed,' etc.,[15] would not make any sense. Saying 'this pot is in the process of arising' means that this pot is at this time yet to come into being. The pot being in the process of arising depends upon the arising of the pot. That which is in the process of arising is also given rise to by the arising."

> 17. If a non-arisen entity
> Exists anywhere,

13. Tsong khapa is quoting from Nāgārjuna's *Sūtrasamuccaya [dBu ma* ki, 223b]. The source for this quotation has not been located.

14. In this context "nonexistence" means *complete* nonexistence.

15. This discussion actually refers to VII: 15, and the quotation seems to be corrupted. *Prasannapadā* [54b] confirms this, supplying the same argument and an accurate quotation of the entire verse.

That entity would have to arise.
But if it were nonexistent, what could arise?

If before the pot has arisen any unarisen entity of the pot existed anywhere, then that would arise in dependence on the activity of arising. But there is not the slightest entity like that existing before it has arisen. Since there is not, what is there to arise? There is not anything, because when you say it arises, that which arises does not exist beforehand.

This explanation, presented earlier in the context of saying, "If there is no entity that is self . . ." [I:3c], is the refutation of arising depending upon causes and conditions. But here the arising—which is said to be the characteristic of the produced—giving rise to an effect is refuted. Therefore, it is not repetitive. Thus it should be known that the refutation of arising in the chapter "Examination of Conditions" and the other refutation of arising in this chapter are not redundant.

Thus, whether we are refuting the *arising* giving rise to the effect, or some *other cause and condition* giving rise to it, in either context the most difficult object of refutation is the arising of the sprout and the like which are in the process of arising. This is because we also accept this conventionally, and if we do not draw the subtle distinctions between what they maintain and how they are refuted, **[177]** then all of our refutations against others will apply to us as well. When we say "the cloth arises," we have to accept both the cloth and its arising. These two cannot be sequential. When we accept the conventional arising of the cloth, there is no contradiction in these two not being sequential. But if one were to maintain that the arising of the cloth is ultimately existent and inherently existent, one would have to accept its arising as cloth *after* the cloth has come into existence. In that case, it would be contradictory for these two not to be sequential.

Therefore the refutation of arising existing ultimately by "If a non-arisen entity . . ." shows that one has to maintain that the time at which a thing exists and the time at which a thing has arisen have to be sequential, by saying that the thing which is to be arisen, having existed before it has arisen, still has to arise. When the opponent maintains that the two times exist sequentially, the refutation is easier. Therefore, it would be difficult to demonstrate to the reificationists who maintain that at the time of the cause there is no effect that they must also maintain that the two times occur sequentially.

It is like this: We and the opponent must agree that in general the cloth to be arisen—the agent—is the basis; that its arising, which depends upon it, is the action; and that when the cloth is about to arise, the cloth, which is the agent and basis, does not exist; and that nonetheless its action of arising exists. However, if the arising of the cloth were to exist ultimately, their being basis and that which is based thereon would have to be their essence inherently. In that case, these properties would be inextricable from them. Therefore, since

even during that time, the cloth must exist, that which has already existed before it has arisen would have to arise again as cloth. This has been explained earlier as well. This is an important argument, which occurs throughout the text.

In the *Buddhapālita* [192a] and *Prajñāpradīpa* [107b] the first two lines of this verse are similar, but the later lines are translated as follows: **[178]**

> Why would that arise as that?
> If it existed it would not arise.[16]

Their commentary is also based on that reading, and so is slightly different.

1.2.1.1.2.1.1.3 Refutation while maintaining arising

> 18. If this arising
> Gives rise to that which is in the process of arising,
> What arising gives rise to
> That arising?

Moreover, although it has been shown that "that which is in the process of arising arises" does not make sense, having accepted the assertion of your system, we now must say this: According to your system, if this arising gives rise to the effect—that which is in the process of arising—then you should be able to say what other arising will have given rise to that arising.

The translations of the other two great commentaries [*Buddhapālita* 192b and *Prajñāpradīpa* 108a] present this as follows:

> What is that arising, which
> Gives rise to that arising? 18cd.[17]

And these commentaries follow this. In *Prasannapadā* there is no difference in the meaning [53a], and it appears that these two are older, more felicitous translations.

> 19. If another arising gave rise to this one
> There would be an infinite regress.
> If anything arose without arising,
> Then everything could arise in this way.

16. The Tibetan edition of the root text and of *Prasannapadā* reads *de ni skye 'gyur dngos po de/med na ci zhig skye bar 'gyur//* while in the *Buddhapālita* and in *Prajñāpradīpa* the same lines read *de ni ci phyir der skye 'gyur/yod na skye bar mi 'gyur ro//.*

17. The Tibetan edition of the root text and of *Prasannapadā* reads *skye ba de ni skye ba lta/gang zhig gis ni skyed par byed//* while in the *Buddhapālita* and in *Prajñāpradīpa* the same lines read *skye ba de ni skyed byed pa/ skye ba yang ni gang zhig yin//.* As Tsong khapa notes, there is no real difference in meaning.

If another arising gave rise to this arising, then since that other would also have to be given rise to by another, there would be an infinite regress. If you do not maintain that there is another arising, without another arising this arising would arise. If this were the case then, just as this arising arises without another arising giving rise to it, all other entities would arise without having been given rise to by arising.

1.2.1.1.2.1.2 Refutation through examination with respect to nonexistence, existence, or both

20. It does not make any sense
For an existent or a nonexistent to arise,
As it is presented before with
"For neither and existent nor a nonexistent."

These four lines, ". . . For an existent or a non existent"[18] say that with respect to the statement "arising gives rise to itself and another," although a critique is not presented in this chapter, it has already been explained. The places where it has been presented before are in contexts such as "For neither an existent nor a nonexistent object . . ." [I: 6a] and "When neither existents nor nonexistents . . ." [I: 7a].

According to Buddhapālita, "as is presented before" refers to the two lines "For neither an existent nor a nonexistent . . ." which explain the refutation of the arising of both existents and nonexistents by demonstrating that the arising of an existent thing makes no sense, and that if a nonexistent thing arises, then a rabbit's horns would arise [193a]. This also could refer to the context of "When neither existents nor nonexistents . . ." These are his two alternative explanations. **[179]**

1.2.1.1.2.1.3 Refutation through examination of whether or not it is in the process of ceasing

21. The arising of an entity in the process of ceasing
Is not tenable.
Nor is it tenable that that which is not
In the process of ceasing is an entity.

Moreover, if this arising is analyzed you cannot avoid two alternatives: If it is analyzed as the arising of a thing that is presently in the process of ceas-

18. The order of the lines has been changed in the English translation of the verse for clarity.

ing—of that which is about to cease—then another arising would not make sense, since it already exists. If it is analyzed as the arising of an entity that is past, or not yet come into existence and which is not in the process of ceasing—that is, which is free from disintegration—then that also is essentially nonarisen, since it is not tenable to call a thing that which is free from the characteristics of a thing—such as disintegration—an *entity*. Here the meaning is that the ceased pot and the pot which is yet to come into being do not have the entity of a pot, but this does not mean that they cannot perform functions. This will be explained later. Through this mode of analysis, other things that are in the past or are yet to come should be understood.

Here, Buddhapālita says that if you say that the entity in the process of arising is given rise to, the entity that is in the process of arising must cease as well. This is because an entity is that which has the characteristic of disintegration. If you maintain this, it will not be tenable to say that the entity that is in the process of ceasing has arising. This is because that which is in the process of arising is developing, and that which is in the process of ceasing is being exhausted. If you think that at the time when the effect is in the process of arising the effect is not in the process of ceasing, then since it would be an arising entity that would not cease, this arising entity would not be an entity, because, being without disintegration it would lack the characteristic of an entity. If you maintain this, it would be irrational to say that an arising entity is given rise to; you would have to say that a nonentity in the process of arising is given rise to [193a].[19] So he explains it.

1.2.1.1.2.2 Refutation of enduring existing essentially

Suppose one said that the arising of entities exists essentially, because enduring exists essentially. Enduring is an entity that exists only if there is arising and if not, does not. Therefore, since enduring exists, arising must exist. The refutation of this has three parts: **[180]** refutation through examination of the activity with respect to the three temporal periods, refutation through the examination of whether or not it is in the process of ceasing, and refutation through the examination of whether or not there is another agent of enduring.

1.2.1.1.2.2.1 Refutation through examination of the activity with respect to the three temporal periods

> 22. An entity that has endured does not endure.
> An entity that has not endured does not endure.

19. Much of the preceding is direct quotation, but some very slight paraphrase, of the *Buddhapālita*.

That which is in the process of enduring does not endure.
What non-arisen can endure?

If endurance existed inherently, you could not escape three alternatives. The entity that has already endured and is past does not endure; this is because at that time, the activity of endurance of whatever is past has already ceased. An entity that is not enduring, and has not yet come into being, is also not enduring, because at that time whatever has not yet come into existence lacks the activity of endurance. That which is in the process of enduring also does not endure because, apart from the earlier two, that which is in the process of enduring is essentially nonexistent.

If that which is in the process of enduring endured, there would have to be two activities of endurance, and in virtue of that there would have to be two agents of enduring. Moreover, the inherent existence of the arisen has already been refuted. And since that does not exist, which thing that is not inherently arisen could have the property of enduring inherently? Nothing could!

1.2.1.1.2.2.2 Refutation through the examination of whether or not it is in the process of ceasing

23. The endurance of an entity in the process of ceasing
Is not tenable.
Nor is it tenable that that which is not in the process of ceasing
Is an entity.

Moreover, if you analyze endurance, you cannot escape from two alternatives. It is not tenable to say that an entity that is in the process of ceasing—that is, which is about to cease—endures inherently, because the two activities of enduring and ceasing are incompatible. Suppose one thought that at the time of endurance it is not in the process of ceasing. But it is not tenable for that which is not in the process of ceasing to be an entity. Therefore, how could there be inherent endurance?

24. Inasmuch as the nature of all entities
Is always aging and death,
Without aging and death,
What entities can endure?

Moreover, aging—that is, becoming other—and dying—that is, disintegration—do not ever release any phenomena from their clutches for even one moment. Therefore, how can those which have endurance inherently be entities that endure without aging and death? They cannot!

Here, whether in a continuum or in moments, **[181]** it is not even conven-

tionally the case that a thing endures for a second moment after the moment in which it has come into existence. The momentariness that is said to be the characteristic of impermanence is the fact that things do not remain in the second moment after the moment in which they come into existence. But momentariness does not mean that they do not remain more than a moment.

Thus, in order to complete a year, twelve months must be completed. After that, that year does not endure. Thus no continua remain for the second moment after the moment in which they have come into existence; they are all momentary. For example, an impermanence, qualified by sound[20] is not instantiated in a pot, though impermanence is instantiated in both sound and a pot. Although the pot's existing in the previous time does not exist at the later time, this does not contradict the pot's enduring through both times. Therefore, though such endurance, and endurance such as the endurance of all phenomena during their respective times, and man abiding on the Earth, exist conventionally, their inherent existence should be rejected. If endurance existed inherently, it would have to endure through all times in the way it was previously. This would contradict the activities of aging and death, but there is no contradiction with *mere* endurance.

1.2.1.1.2.2.3 Refutation through the examination of whether or not there is another agent of enduring

25. For enduring to endure through another
Enduring or through itself makes no sense,
Just as arising cannot arise through itself
Or through another arising.

Moreover, if enduring exists inherently, you cannot escape two alternatives. For enduring to endure through another agent of enduring does not make any sense, because we can apply here what has been demonstrated with regard to arising—that is not arisen through another arising, saying:

> If another enduring endured through this one
> There would be an infinite regress.[21]

For enduring to endure through its own agency of enduring wouldn't make any sense. We can apply the fact that arising cannot give rise to itself to demonstrate this incoherence.

20. Note that there is a difference between the property of impermanence in general and individual impermanences, which are instantiations of that property in particular impermanent phenomena.

21. A rearrangement of VII: 19.

How could this enduring, not enduring
Make itself endure?
And if something enduring makes it enduring,
Being enduring, what is there to endure?[22]

[182] The *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says

These phenomena do not endure because
Endurance is not in them.
Even though non-enduring is expressed by "enduring,"
It is not found to exist inherently.

The protector of the world has not presented
Enduring and arising.
Therefore one should understand the samādhi,
Seeing that protector of the world. [*mDo sde* da 45a]

This means that by realizing the Dharma taught by the Victor—that enduring and arising do not exist inherently—one should understand that samadhi. According to the *Sañcayagāthā-sūtra*,

Whoever does not remain fixed on form, does not remain fixed on feeling,
Whoever does not remain fixed on perception, does not remain fixed on awareness,
Does not remain fixed on consciousness, remains fixed on reality.
This is the practice of the supreme perfection of wisdom.

Permanence and impermanence, bliss and suffering, beauty and ugliness,
Self and selflessness, reality and irreality.
He is not fixed on the achieved fruit or arhathood.
Nor is he fixed on pratyekabuddhahood, nor on buddhahood.

Just as the Teacher does not remain fixed on unproduced elements,
Nor does he remain fixed on the produced, and thus practices not remaining fixed on things.
Thus the bodhisattva remains fixed on the ground without remaining fixed.
Remaining fixed without remaining fixed is how the Victor said one should remain fixed.[23] [29–31, *Sher phyin* ka 3b]

22. This is a rearrangement of VII: 13, but the Tibetan and Sanskrit grammar follow the grammar of the verse better than we can make the English follow it. In Tibetan *gnas pa*, like *skye ba* is transitive, unlike the verb "to endure" in the relevant sense in English.

23. The verb *gnas pa*, translated elsewhere in this chapter as *to endure*, is used in this passage to mean *to remain fixed on*.

1.2.1.1.2.3 Refutation of ceasing existing essentially

The third section has three parts: the mode of refutation through the analysis of cessation, the argument showing that this critique is not applicable to us, and the refutation of the thesis that cessation is causeless.

1.2.1.1.2.3.1 The mode of refutation through the analysis of cessation

Suppose one said that arising and endurance exist essentially because ceasing, which coexists with them, exists. The refutation of this has five parts: refutation through examination of the three temporal periods, refutation through examination of whether or not it endures, refutation through examination of the stages of self and others, **[183]** refutation through examination of whether or not entities exist, and refutation through examination of whether or not there is another agent of cessation.

1.2.1.1.2.3.1.1 Refutation through examination of the three temporal periods

> 26. That which has ceased does not cease.
> What has not yet ceased does not cease.
> Nor does that which is in the process of ceasing.
> What non-arisen can cease?

If impermanence existed inherently, one cannot escape three alternatives. That which has ceased does not cease because the past and the present are mutually exclusive. According to the position that maintains that disintegration is an entity,[24] for an entity like a pot to cease, there is no cessation of an entity that is to be ceased. The reason is that the two—the present activity of the cessation of the pot and the past disintegration of the pot—are mutually exclusive.

That which has not ceased—that is, that in which the activity of cessation has not arisen (that is, is yet to come)—also cannot cease, because it lacks cessation. Nor can that which is in the process of ceasing; that is, it does not

24. Here we translate *zhig pa* as *disintegration*. This noun must be taken as referring to the state of being disintegrated, not the process of disintegrating. By "entity," (*dngos po*) Tsong khapa means an impermanent product with a continuum distinct from that of the pot itself.

cease essentially because apart from the previous two, the process of ceasing does not exist inherently.

If that which is in the process of ceasing had cessation inherently, there would have to be two activities of cessation. If that were so, there would have to be two agents of cessation. With respect to cessation, there are two: the activity—here is the activity of ceasing; and the subject—this ceases. This should be understood for enduring as well.

Moreover, since essential arising has been refuted, how can something that has not arisen essentially cease essentially? It cannot!

1.2.1.1.2.3.1.2 Refutation through examination of whether or not it endures

> 27. The cessation of an entity that is enduring
> Is not tenable.
> Nor is the cessation of
> An entity that is not enduring.

Moreover, if cessation existed through its essence, one could not escape two alternatives. It is not tenable that an enduring entity has cessation inherently because it is contradictory for both the activity of ceasing and the activity of enduring to be instantiated in the same basis. Nor is it tenable for the activity of ceasing to be instantiated in an entity that does not endure during its time of existence, because **[184]** such a thing is not even existent.

1.2.1.1.2.3.1.3 Refutation through examination of the stages of self and others

This third section has two parts: the main point and the rebuttal of refutations

1.2.1.1.2.3.1.3.1 The main point

> 28. A state does not make
> That state itself cease.
> Nor does one state
> Make another state cease.

Moreover, if cessation existed inherently, it could not escape two alternatives with respect to cessation. The state of being milk does not make the state of being milk itself cease because reflexive action is contradictory. The state of

being yoghurt—which is different from the state of being milk—does not cause the state of being milk—which is different from the state of being yoghurt—to cease, because the object of cessation and the agent of cessation do not exist at the same time.

1.2.1.1.2.3.1.3.2 Rebuttal of refutations

Suppose someone said that although neither does a state cause itself to cease nor does one state cause another state to cease, since the state of being milk has cessation, it must have arising:

> 29. Since for no entity
> Is arising tenable,
> For no entity
> Is ceasing tenable.

Has this not been made clear already? Since, as it has been previously explained, it is not tenable for any phenomenon to arise essentially, as per this explanation, it is not tenable for any phenomenon to cease essentially.

Buddhapālita says that this verse is a reply to the following rebuttal: Cessation does not exist in the way that you have accepted it earlier, because since you have asserted that arising is not tenable for a thing that is in the process of cessation, you have refuted the existence of the arising that is arisen from the cause that is in the process of cessation.

1.2.1.1.2.3.1.4 Refutation through examination of whether or not entities exist

> 30. For an existent entity
> Cessation is not tenable.
> A single thing being an entity and
> A nonentity is not tenable.

Moreover, if cessation existed inherently, one cannot escape the two possibilities with respect to the existence and nonexistence of an entity. It is not tenable to say that any existent entity ceases essentially because it is not tenable for both entities and nonentities—such things as pots and their disintegration—to be identical. Here, disintegration is a phenomenon grounded in an entity. **[185]** So, if cessation existed inherently, then even at the time when the disintegration of the pot exists it would have to be grounded on the pot. One could also read this as follows: It is not tenable for an existent entity to be

existent and nonexistent, just like light and darkness, which are mutually exclusive.

> 31. Moreover, for a nonexistent entity
> Cessation would be untenable.
> Just as a second head
> Cannot be cut off.

Nor is it tenable for a nonexistent entity to cease, because it does not exist. This is just like, for example, the fact that without two heads, two beheadings cannot be performed. Since the nonexistence of two heads is widely known, although "nonexistent" is not explicitly stated, it does not need to be stated, since the explanation is obvious.

1.2.1.1.2.3.1.5 Refutation through examination of whether or not there is another agent of cessation

> 32. Cessation does not exist through itself.
> Nor does it exist through another.
> Just as arising is given rise to
> Neither by itself nor by another.

Moreover, if cessation makes entities cease, one cannot escape two alternatives with respect to that agent of cessation: It has to be the same or different. Cessation cannot make itself cease, just as arising cannot give rise to itself. This is similar because we could rearrange the text as follows:

> How could this cessation, being non-ceased,
> Make itself cease?
> And if it is caused to cease by something ceased,
> Having ceased, what is there to cease?[25]

However, nothing other than cessation can make cessation cease, just as nothing other than arising can give rise to arising, because one could rearrange the text as follows:

> If another cessation caused this one to cease,
> There would be an infinite regress.
> If anything could cease without cessation,
> Then everything could cease in this way.[26]

25. This is a rearrangement of VII: 13, as per *Prasannapadā* [58b] following the suggestion of Buddhapālita [197a], who quotes the source verse and suggest the rearrangement in prose.

26. This is a rearrangement of VII: 19, also as per *Prasannapadā* [58b] following the suggestion of Buddhapālita [197a], who once again quotes the source verse and compares in prose.

So, having analyzed it in this way, it is untenable in any way for arising, enduring, or ceasing to exist inherently. Since this is untenable, how could they be the characteristics of the produced inherently?

1.2.1.1.2.3.2 The argument showing that this critique is not applicable to us

Suppose you thought as follows: Since you have analyzed in this way, even in *your* system cessation makes no sense. If this is so, since we are both subject to the same critique, **[186]** you should not advance this as an argument against others. The mādhyamika replies to this as follows: Since we accept mundane conventions, the critique leveled against you does not apply to us. As mundane conventions posit things, entities are without essence, and that also follows the convention of ordinary people who are attached to entities as truly existent [See *Prasannapadā* 58b–59a]. Here is how: It is to designate an object, for instance cessation, without applying the following mode of examination and inquiry: not being content with mere nominal designation, to investigate the basis of designation, asking whether or not it exists in the past or future, etc., and thereby, to posit it as cessation, having found it through analysis.

Moreover, the analysis to determine whether or not they exist as they are—as illusionlike—is not appropriate to mundane phenomena. Nonetheless, they exist from the mundane perspective conditioned by the clouding of the wisdom-eye by the mist of ignorance. Therefore, ordinary people accept things as existing just in mutual dependence. Therefore, if the arisen object exists, then the agent of arising exists; and if the agent of arising exists, the arisen object exists. If cessation exists, the object of cessation—that is the thing which is to cease—exists; and if the object of cessation—that is, the thing which is to cease—exists, cessation exists. The mādhyamika maintains this as well, but does not posit such things as cessation with respect to an object found through analysis.[27]

To sum this all up, as was previously explained, we also accept that if entities are analyzed, neither arising nor cessation nor enduring is found. But the reason that this does not refute the arising, cessation, etc., that we accept is that we do not maintain that arising, cessation, etc., withstand analysis, as was explained earlier. Nor do we accept inherent existence, that in virtue of which one has to accept that things withstand analysis. **[187]**

Thus, for those who accept neither that which withstands analysis nor anything in a category that withstands analysis, how would not finding something through rational analysis undermine accepting it? It would not, because

27. This entire section follows *Prasannapadā* [58b–59a].

the mere existence of arising, cessation, and enduring does not need to be found by a rational mind through analysis. As for you, since you maintain that arising, cessation, etc., withstand analysis, and accept the things in those categories as well, if they are not found through the analysis we considered previously, their existence *would* be undermined, because if they exist in the way they are accepted, they would have to be found through those reasoning processes, and they are not found.

Prasannapadā presents the reason that the critique Candrakīrti leveled against the others does not apply to him as well as follows: We do not accept that things withstand analysis, but we do accept them according to ordinary conventions without analysis [59a]. Therefore, this is the way one should reply: One should not say that one has no position, thinking that since analytic reasoning refutes all arising, enduring, and cessation if one maintained a position, the critique that one levels against others will be seen to apply to oneself as well. This should be understood in the context of every chapter, because it enables one to draw the line between that which is to be refuted and that which is not to be refuted and to draw the distinction between that which does not withstand rational analysis and that which is undermined by rational analysis. Every chapter depends on these distinctions.

1.2.1.1.2.3.3 Refutation of the thesis that cessation is causeless

The third section has two parts: the arguments presented in *Prasannapadā* and the arguments presented in *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*.

1.2.1.1.2.3.3.1 The arguments presented in *Prasannapadā*

Here the *Commentary* refutes the view of those who maintain that cessation is causeless and that the produced is momentary by arguing that since they would be without cause, it would follow that they would be without cessation, and how could entities that lack momentariness and cessation be produced? Therefore all of this would be inconsistent.

Those who assert the causelessness of cessation maintain that cessation—not remaining for a moment after the moment of coming into existence—arises from the very cause of that thing, **[188]** and that apart from that cause there is no other subsequent cause. Since the disintegration in the second moment is a nonentity, they maintain that it is utterly causeless. Therefore, suppose someone asked: How does it make sense for you to present the in-

consistency of entities not being produced and the produced being momentary to those who maintain that disintegration is causeless on the ground of the absence of momentary cessation?

In response to this, as will be explained later, cessation and noncessation are similar with respect to whether or not they are given rise to by causes. Therefore, if that which has not remained for the second moment had no cause, then, since a cause would not be necessary for that which does not remain in existence in the second moment, it would not be momentary. In that case, neither could the thing be established as a produced phenomenon nor would it be tenable to assert that the produced phenomenon is momentary [59a].

This was a refutation through argument; now here is a refutation through scripture. When the teacher said that through birth as the condition, aging and death come about, and that the characteristics of the produced are included among the compound aggregates, did he not thereby clearly say that cessation has a cause? He did, because death is the disintegration of the sentient being, and that arises conditioned by birth. Saying this, he established that cessation is given rise to by a cause [Vasubandhu, *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa, Sems tsam she* 15a].

His assertion that the four characteristics—arising, enduring, aging, and ceasing—are dispositional aggregates can be illustrated as follows: If we take the example of a patch of blue, since it has the four activities—the activity of arising, etc.,—blueness is characterized as produced. Since for blueness—as an agent—to be its own activity would be contradictory, the four activities are not form aggregates. Neither are they feeling, nor perception, nor consciousness, nor psychological compounds, and therefore they are non-psychophysical aggregates.

Nonetheless, such things as the arising of a patch of blue are not explained to be non-psychophysical aggregates on the grounds that the patch of blue arises where it has been previously absent, endures while it exists, ceases without remaining for the second moment after the moment when it comes into existence, and ages, becoming different from what it was earlier.[28] **[189]**

The activity of the ceasing of the blue patch, since it has disintegration at the second moment after the moment of *its* coming into existence, and since it is a non-psychophysical aggregate, must be produced through its own causes and conditions. Therefore, it is established that disintegration has a cause.

The argument that it is necessary to posit disintegration since it is the activity of the cessation of a patch of blue is this: Since it has been shown that

28. Tsong khapa is arguing that since the blue patch is a material form, its arising, enduring, aging, and cessation are material, not mental.

the nondisintegration of the blue patch while it exists and its disintegration at the second moment are similar with respect to whether they are entities or not, it follows that its disintegration would be its impermanence. The meaning of the statement that these are the characteristics of the produced is that they are merely indicators—that in virtue of having these activities things are known as the produced. But they are *not* like characteristics such as the bulbousness of the pot, which are *defining characteristics*. They are not, because the absurd consequence would follow that impermanence would not have momentariness as its defining characteristic.

By reason of the assertion that aging and death are conditioned by birth, disintegration at the second moment depends merely on having arisen at the first moment, and does not need to depend on anything else. Therefore, it is easy to prove that momentary things that do not remain for a second moment cease. So all of this fits together nicely in this system.

Suppose one thought as follows: The disintegration of a sprout is a nonentity, so why would it need to have a cause? So, it does not have a cause. Well, then, the sprout is an existent, and since it is, what is the need for it to have a cause? For what is already arisen does not need anything to give rise to it. This shows that these cases are similar: If there is no need for a cause for a disintegrated sprout, there is no need for a cause for a nondisintegrated sprout. Since that which is nondisintegrated has already come into existence, it does not need a cause now. But its coming into existence was brought about by a cause; therefore, it has a cause. This is the fundamental response. We will demonstrate the invulnerability of this response below. Moreover, the arising of the sprout, which was not there previously at the time of the seed, and exists later, has a cause. Similarly, since **[190]** the disintegration of the sprout—which does not exist at the time of the sprout, but exists later—exists, it has a cause.

Suppose one said that if this were the case, it would be irrational to ask what a cause would do for the disintegration of the sprout. We do not maintain that a cause in the present makes it become something else. But the disintegration of the sprout is indeed brought about by a cause. In that case, he would say, it must be an entity. We agree with this, because with respect to its nature it is an entity, though with respect the sprout it is not an entity.

Moreover, in *Daśābhūmi-sūtra* it says,

> Death also involves two activities: It destroys the compounds and it provides the cause for the unbroken continuum of ignorance. [*phal chen* kha 221b]

Since it says this, disintegration can perform a function, and therefore it has a cause. In this context, in *Prasannapadā,* the usage of the word "destruction" accords with the thesis that disintegration of a thing itself is destruction. But the opponent regards destruction and disintegration as mutually incom-

patible. Therefore, here we use "disintegration." Through the example of the sprout the disintegration of other entities should be understood.

1.2.1.1.2.3.3.2 The arguments presented in *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti*

The cause of the disintegration at the second moment of the thing that existed at the first moment has already been explained. Apart from that, the cause of the disintegration of the continuum is like the exhaustion of the butter and the wick as the cause of the extinguishment of the butterlamp as explained in the *Yuktiśáṣṭikāvṛtti* [*dBu ma* ya 15b].

Here, according to the opponent, the exhaustion of the butter and the wick are not the cause of the extinguishment of the butterlamp; instead the exhaustion of the butter and the wick is the incompleteness of the set of conditions for the final moment of the butterlamp to give rise to a similar subsequent moment. They also say that a thing yet to come is also not arisen just because the set of causes for it to arise is not complete.

In response to that, it is said that if that were so, then when the set of causes for something is not incomplete that thing must certainly arise. The incompleteness of the set of causes is accepted as the cause of the non-arising of things that are yet to come. Therefore, it would have to be accepted that, because of the exhaustion of the cause of endurance, the effect—the endurance—is exhausted. **[191]**

The cause of the sprout that is to arise—not arisen at present, and yet to come—is also regarded as the incompleteness of its conditions due to conditions that existed earlier. This is because one who posits the disintegration of the sprout as an entity must maintain the same thing about that which is yet to come.

Candrakīrti responds to the argument that the exhaustion of the butter and the wick cannot be a cause by providing a similar argument to the effect that their nonexhaustion and existence could then also not be a cause: The seed, at that very stage of its existence, cannot be perceived as the cause of the sprout. The explanation of such statements has been presented earlier.[29] Therefore, causes and effects of things such as the sprout should be posited in accordance the way things are seen by ordinary beings. Ordinary people say, "Since there was no water my crops failed, without food, my son died, Without the former, the latter was lost." Just as the non-exhaustion of water and the non-exhaustion of food, respectively, are regarded as the causes of good crops and the life of the son, their exhaustion is also posited as the cause of the

29. See chapter I.

respective losses. Therefore their nonexhaustion is not similar to their nonexistence, which is not exhaustion and thus one should understand this with respect to the effect as well. This is the meaning of the statement, "Both things and non-things are compounded" [XXV: 13], as will be explained below, and of the following statement in *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā:*

> From the exhaustion of causes comes peace.
> Exhaustion is perceived. [20ab]

Catuḥśataka also says:

> The effect destroys the cause.
> Therefore, the nonexistent does not arise. [XV: 2]

The cessation of the cause is brought about by the effect that is in the process of arising, as has been explained, and so is the view of the noble father and son. Because of the fact that they maintain that the past disintegration of the sprout is an entity, the future sprout is treated similarly. And this also means that nonexistents do not arise. This framework for understanding the past and the future is not tenable in the system according to which things exist inherently, but it is completely tenable according to the system in which essence is not acceptable even conventionally. This is explained in the *Commentary to Catuḥśataka* [*dBu ma* ya 224a] **[192]** and is extremely important in this system. However, since it is little known, it has been explained in detail here.

1.2.1.2 Individual refutations of the particular characteristics

Suppose one argued that although the universal characteristics of the produced—arising, enduring, and ceasing—have been refuted, the produced phenomena which have particular characteristics—solidity, dewlap-possession, etc.—do exist essentially.

> 33. Since arising, enduring, and ceasing
> Do not exist, there are no produced things.

Thus it follows from the fact that arising, enduring, and ceasing are not essentially existent that the produced does not exist essentially. Therefore these particular characteristics do not exist essentially either.

1.2.2 Showing that thereby the essential existence of the unproduced is also refuted

Suppose one argued that the produced exists essentially because its opposite, the unproduced, exists.

33cd. If no produced things exist,
How could the unproduced exist?

Since, as explained earlier, produced things do not exist inherently in any way, how could these four unproduced phenomena—cessation occasioned by analysis, cessation not occasioned by analysis, space, and reality—exist inherently?[30] They cannot! This is explained clearly.

It follows from the extensive refutation of the true existence of produced things that there is no way that unproduced phenomena can truly exist. The point of asserting this in this text is that even those who maintain that the unproduced truly exists must maintain that it is an object of authoritative cognition. In that case, this argument refutes them: "The object to be measured is not measured." Even if they maintain them to be objects to be achieved, "Whatever is to be achieved is not achieved" refutes them. Even if they maintain that it abides on a certain ground, "Whatever endures does not endure" refutes them.[31] Even if they posit them as the cause of achievement, they are refuted as it is explained in the "Examination of the Aggregates." Those who posit them in terms of characteristics and characterized should be refuted as it is explained in the "Examination of the Elements." Following these examples, the arguments explained in the other previous chapters could be reformulated as refutations. **[193]**

If these arguments could not refute the true existence of the unproduced as objects to be achieved, etc., it would be impossible to refute the true existence of produced things. These cases are completely similar. Thus, if one develops a good understanding of the arguments advanced by the master, in each chapter all such misunderstandings will be eliminated. Therefore, to say that although the produced are not truly existent, the unproduced are truly existent is the statement of a philosophical neophyte.

1.2.3 Rebutting the view that this refutation contradicts scriptures

If arising, enduring, and ceasing do not exist inherently, how could one make sense of statements such as "the produced are seen to arise" [*Saṁyuttanikāya, Khandhavagga, Ānandasutta,* Vol. II, 792]?

34. Like a dream, like an illusion,
Like a city of gandharvas,

30. These are the four categories of the unproduced in the Vaibhāṣikas system—see *Abhidharmakośa* I: 5–6.

31. All of these are lines composed on the template of verses found in chapter II.

So have arising, enduring,
And ceasing been explained.

It is explained that arising, enduring and ceasing are just like a dream, just like an illusion, just like a city of gandharvas, but it is not said that arising, etc., exist inherently. Just as while such things as a mirage do not exist essentially as they appear, but are nonetheless the objects of our verbal conventions, arising, etc., though they do not exist essentially, are presented from the perspective of how they are known in the ordinary world.

In brief, although arising, ceasing, etc., do not exist inherently, they are posited on the basis of that illusionlike appearance. This does not contradict the scriptures where they are presented, because it would only contradict scripture to say that arising, ceasing, etc., cannot be established at all. According to *Prajñāpradīpa,* in order to eliminate the thought that arising, etc., truly exist because arising, etc., are the objects of direct perception; because they have agents; and because they are commonly perceived by many sentient beings, the three examples, including the dream, are explained in that order [113a].

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

In order to show the absence of inherent existence of arising, enduring, and ceasing, which has been shown by all of these arguments and which is corroborated by definitive scriptures, the statement that form does not have arising, **[194]** the statement that form does not have endurance, and the statement that form does not have ceasing—all of these statements presented in the scriptures—are brought into this chapter and are explained by providing arguments. In order to show this, a brief indication of corroboration by citations from the definitive sūtras is presented. The *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says:

By generating the idea
That some assemblage of skin, sinew, flesh, and bone
Is my wife, fools develop attachment.
They don't understand that the woman is illusionlike. [*Ārya-Vīradattagṛhapatiparipṛcchā-sūtra, dKon brtsegs* ca 202a][32]

and

Just as in a young girl's dream
A boy turns up and dies, and thus
She becomes happy when he turns up and sad when he dies,

32. This quotation is misattributed in the text. The remaining quotations, howevever, are from the *Samādhirāja-sūtra.*

> All phenomena should be understood in a similar way. [*mDo sde* da 26b]

and

> Just like a city of gandharvas, a mirage,
> An illusion, a dream, and the like
> All phenomena should be understood.
> Meditation on representations is empty of essence. [*mDo sde* da 26a]

Moreover, it says:

> All the produced and unproduced are free.
> Those sages have no conceptual thought.
> In every realm, since they have achieved the non-produced,
> They are entirely free from views.
>
> Those who understand this kind of phenomenon
> Are never attached, are never evil and never ignorant.
> Their minds are thus concentrated on essence.
> And they are powerful, possessing a powerful samādhi. [*mDo sde* da 147a]

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

It should be ascertained through argument that if arising, enduring and ceasing existed as they are grasped—that is, inherently, without being merely posited through nominal convention—the three could not be posited in any way. Thereafter one should practice as follows: They are completely tenable insofar as they are merely posited by nominal convention, and although all of the produced things are empty of inherent existence, their appearance in their respective guises should be taken like illusions and like dreams.

This is the commentary on the seventh chapter, having thirty-four verses, called "the examination of arising, enduring, and ceasing."

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CHAPTER VIII

Examination of the Agent and Action

Chapter Outline

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[195:3] We are in the section of the text explaining the refutation of the proof of the existence of the self of phenomena, and having completed the first two parts of that section, which were the refutation of the existence of the defilements and the refutation of the existence of the arising, ceasing, and enduring of the characteristics, we are now in the third part of that section which is the refutation of the existence of the agent and action. This section has three parts: the explanation of the chapter, confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here some argue that produced phenomena such as consciousness exist inherently, because their cause—agent and action—exists. They point out that the teacher also says:

> The person driven by ignorance assembles meritorious dispositions, nonmeritorious dispositions and unshakable dispositions.
> [*Śālistambha-sūtra, mDo sde* tsha 120a][1]

The agent of action, his action, and its effect—such things as consciousness—are thus presented.

The refutation of this statement has three parts: the refutation of agent and action existing inherently, the mode of positing action and agent conventionally, and applying the argument to other phenomena.

1.1 Refutation of agent and action existing inherently

This first part has two sections: the refutation of the homogeneous position with respect to the inherent existence of agent and action and the refutation of the nonhomogeneous position with respect to the inherent existence of agent and action.

1.1.1 Refutation of the homogeneous position with respect to the inherent existence of agent and action

This section has two parts: the refutation of the first two alternatives with respect to agent and action and the refutation of the third alternative with respect to agent and action.

1. There is a slight variation in the sDe dge translation, but no difference in meaning.

1.1.1.1 Refutation of the first two alternatives with respect to agent and action

This section has two parts: stating the conclusion and presenting the argument.

1.1.1.1.1 Stating the conclusion

1. That which is an agent
Does not perform an existent action.
Nor does that which is not an agent
Perform some nonexistent action.

Anyone who performs even the slightest action is called an agent, as one says, "since this acts, this is an agent." And if they do not perform an action they are not. Only three alternatives preconceivable with respect to the performance or nonperformance of action: performance by an agent, by that which is not an agent, or by that which is and is not an agent in relation to that action. "Since this is acted upon it is an object; **[196]** the object is said to be the final end."[*Pāṇinivyākaraṇasātra*, 1/4/49].[2] With respect to this there are three alternatives: that which is an action; that which is not an action, or that which is and is not, depending on the individual object to which it is related.

That which is an agent and has an action does not perform an action that does not have activity. This is the first conclusion. That which is not an agent and has no action does not perform an action that does not have activity. This is the second conclusion.

1.1.1.1.2 Presenting the argument

This section has two parts: presenting the argument for the first conclusion and presenting the argument for the second conclusion.

1.1.1.1.2.1 Presenting the argument for the first conclusion

This section has two parts: refutation by reductio showing that there is an action without an agent and refutation by reductio showing that there is an agent that does not do anything.

2. Sanskrit: *karturīpsitatamam*. There is a grammatical point here: The object in question is in the *accusative* vs., e.g., instrumental or locative case, indicating that it is a final end in a hierarchy of ends and is not a means to any other end.

1.1.1.1.2.1.1 Refutation by reductio showing that there is an action without an agent

> 2. That which is an agent has no activity.
> There would then be action without an agent.

Since the agent is posited on the ground that it performs an action, only in virtue of having activity does it merit the title "agent." That which is already an agent in virtue of performing an action now does not have another action to perform in order to become an agent. Since it does not have another action to perform, the agent would not perform an action; then the action would be independent of the agent. It is impossible to have an action without an agent. This would be like the son of a barren woman making a pot. When the reductio is contraposed, we can reason from the impossibility of an action without an agent to the fact that the performance of an action by that which is an agent does not exist inherently. Thus we prove the first conclusion.

Merely in virtue of performing the action of making a clay pot, the potter is posited as the agent of the making of the pot.[3] Did he not perform the action of making the pot? Just because he performs the action of making the pot, the potter is first posited as the agent. Thereafter, he would have to be performing an action that was *other* than that one, but since there is no other action, **[197]** the action of making a clay pot would become an action that is not performed by an agent.

Why does this refutation make sense? We maintain conventionally that that which is an agent performs that which is an action, and just in virtue of performing a single action, one is posited as an agent, and that that action is posited as having been performed. For example, it is said that when Lhejin performs the meritorious action of prostrating, Lhejin is the agent of that action, and it is said that through the action of prostration the merit is accumulated, and thus it is an action. Since that merit is said to be accumulated, action is performed. However, suppose one asserts that the agent and action exist inherently. But when a single action is performed, one cannot posit that as both action and agent. Therefore the refutation succeeds. This is because the action of making is dependent on both the potter and the clay. If both of these bases existed individually through their own characteristics, the action should also exist as a distinct individual. Therefore it would be contradictory to have a single action relying on two bases in common. This is just as it has been explained earlier. Therefore, if it does not perform a second action, which is not the action in virtue of which it is posited as an agent, that which is an

3. *bum pa'i byed pa po*—lexically, *agent of the pot.*

agent would not perform that which is an action. This establishes the relation required in the argument that is the contrapositive of the reductio presented earlier.

That which is maintained to be an agent, if it does not perform the action it should be performing, cannot be established as an agent. Here, he charges that the absurd consequence would ensue that an action that is to be performed would not be performed by anyone, but he does not charge that the person who does not perform any action would be an agent.

1.1.1.1.2.1.2 Refutation by reductio showing that there is an agent that does not do anything

> 2cd. That which is an action has no activity.[4]
> There would also be agent without action.

Since that which is an action is posited on the ground that it is performed by an agent, only that which has activity merits the title "action." That which is already an action in virtue of having activity **[198]** now does not need another activity to make it happen. If it were the case that without another activity, the agent does not perform an action then, that very person—who is without an action (that is, who does not perform an action)—would be the agent. But there is no agent without an action. For example, a person who does not perform an action with immediate consequence[5] is not seen as its agent.

Thus, the argument that is the contrapositive of the reductio establishes that that which is an action is not inherently performed by that which is an agent. The way this refutation proceeds should be understood through the previous discussion. That which is maintained to be an action, if it is not performed by an agent, cannot be established as an action. Here, he hurls down the reductio that the agent of the action would be one who does not perform any action, but he does not hurl down a reductio that an action to be performed is not performed by anyone.

1.1.1.1.2.2 Presenting the argument for the second conclusion

This second section has two parts: refuting through the absurd consequence that there would be no cause and impugning those who maintain that.

4. *yin par gyur* actually has no object in this verse. For English grammar and cogency we are supplying the object phrase "agent without action" from 2b.

5. This refers to the five actions that have the consequence that one immediately goes to Avīci hell without passing through the intermediate state, viz., killings one's parent, killing one's teacher, killing a bodhisattva, killing an arhat and injuring a buddha.

1.1.1.1.2.2.1 Refuting through the absurd consequence that there would be no cause

3. If that which is not an agent
Were to perform that which is not an action,
Then the action would be without a cause
And the agent would be without a cause.

If it is maintained that that which is not an agent performed that which is not an action, then the action that is to be performed by that person would be without a cause, because *it* would be without activity. Moreover, there would be no cause for positing the person as the agent of his action, because *he* would be without activity.

1.1.1.1.2.2.2 Impugning those who maintain that

4. Without a cause, the effect and
The cause would not be possible.
Without this, action,
Agent and instrument would not be possible.[6]

If neither that which is to be performed nor that which performs it has a cause, there would be no effect—no clay pot—because there is no cause. If there were no clay pot, its cause and supporting conditions, such as the wheel, would also not be possible. Without both cause and effect, for the purpose of making what kind of pot as an effect would there be action; would the potter independently become an agent; would the clay, being in its nature the primary cause of making that which is to be made, be the cause? None of this would make any sense.

5. If such things as action were not possible,
The virtuous and vicious would not be possible.
If there were neither the virtuous nor the vicious,
Effects could not arise from them.

6. If there were no effects, liberation and
Paths to higher realms would not be possible.
The absurd consequence would follow
That all action would be pointless.

6. The Tibetan term translated here as *cause* in the first line is *rgyu*. The term translated as *instrument* in the final line is *byed pa*. But both of these Tibetan terms translate the Sanskrit *karaṇam*, which means *the instrumental condition*.

If the three—action, etc.—did not make any sense, **[199]** then such things as the ten moral virtues and the ten moral vices would not be possible, because the agent who independently acts abandoning or relying on them respectively, through body, speech, and mind as instrumental causes—when he performs the actions of abandoning or relying on them—gives rise to virtue or to vice, respectively. Without virtuous and vicious phenomena, there would be neither happiness nor unhappiness as their respective effects. Without these two effects, obtaining liberation by meditating on the eightfold path that leads to it would not make sense. It would not make sense to attain higher realms—the form and the formless realms—through the path of meditative concentration and formless absorption, which constitute the paths that lead to them. Moreover, the absurd consequence would follow that all mundane activities, such as farming, would be pointless. But since they are not pointless, one should contrapose each of these arguments in reverse order. Thus one should not maintain that that which is not an agent performs that which is not an action. To maintain this is the source of all of these errors.

1.1.1.2 Refutation of the third alternative with respect to agent and action

> 7. That which is and is not an agent
> Does not perform that which is and is not an action.
> The same thing cannot both be and not be so.
> Since they are contradictory, how could it be like that?

According to those who maintain that these have different aspects, a thing is an action or an agent depending upon its substance, and prior to their being agent and action, neither has its status. Similarly, some maintain that that which is and which is not an agent performs that which is and which is not an action. This would make no sense, because it would be contradictory for that which is an agent and that which is an action simultaneously to be that which is not an agent and that which is not an action, respectively. Where could such things be? Nowhere! Suppose one thought that since it was posited in accordance with their different aspects, no error is committed. Even that has been refuted by the previous two arguments, so that would not make sense.

1.1.2 Refutation of the nonhomogeneous position with respect to the inherent existence of agent and action

This section has two parts: the refutation of each agent performing each nonhomogeneous action and the refutation of the agent performing two nonhomogeneous actions. **[200]**

1.1.2.1 Refutation of each agent performing each nonhomogeneous action

8. That which is an agent
Does not perform that which is not an action.
Nor does that which is not perform that which is.[7]
From this all of those errors would follow.

That which is an agent—that is, that which has activity—does not perform that which is not an action—that is, that which is free from activity.[8] This is because in this context as well, where that which is an agent is acting, as was previously explained, the absurd consequence would follow that there would be an agent without another action to perform, and there would be an action not performed by anyone. Moreover, as was explained before, in the context of the performance of that which is not an action, errors would ensue, such as the absurd consequence that that which is not an action would be causeless. In addition, that which is not an agent does not perform that which is an action, because of the error that should be understood to have been explained earlier. Here the reason for not refuting nonhomogeneity by considering the third alternative is that it is thought that it is not different from the following contexts.

1.1.2.2 Refutation of the agent performing two nonhomogeneous actions

9. That which is an agent with activity
Does not perform that which is not[9]
Or that which is and is not an action.
We have already presented the arguments.

That which is an agent having activity performs neither that which is not an action nor that which both is and is not an action. This is because of the

7. The first three lines read differently in the *Buddhapālita* [200a–200b]. Tsong khapa is following the Tibetan edition of *Prasannapadā,* which reads *byed pa por ni gyur pa yis/ma gyur las ni mi byed de/ma gyur pas kyong gyar mi byed* while the *Buddhapālitī* reads *byed pa po dang las dag ni/gyur pa ma gyur mi byed do/ma gyur pa yang gyur mi byed//*. Each is an acceptable translation of the Sanskrit.

8. We ignore the initial *gal te,* which seems to have no place in the sentence, though it occurs in both Lhasa [116b] and Tashi lhunpo [116b]. Our reading is consistent with *Prasannapadā* [62b].

9. Here as well, the first two lines read differently in the *Buddhapālita* [200b] Tsong khapa is following the Tibetan edition of *Prasannapadā,* which reads *byed pa por ni ma gyur pa dang/bcas pa las ni ma gyur dang/* while the *Buddhapālita* reads *byed pa po dang las dag ni/gyur dang bcas pa ma gyur dang//*.

previous arguments—that is, lines of reasoning: "that which is an agent has no activity. . . ." [VIII: 2a], which shows that saying that that which is already an agent performs an action is erroneous; and because of ". . . Then the action would be without a cause . . ." [VIII: 3c], which shows that saying that that which is not an action is performed is erroneous; and because of ". . . The same thing cannot both be and not be so . . ." [VIII: 7c], which shows that saying that that which both is and is not an action is performed is erroneous.

10. That which is not an agent with activity
Does not perform that which is an action
Or that which is and is not.
We have already presented the arguments.[10]

That which is not an agent performs neither that which is an action—that is, that which has activity—nor that which both is and is not an action because of the previous arguments: An action without an agent would be causeless; and the lines of reasoning that show that that which is already an action must be performed is erroneous—". . . That which is an action has no activity . . ." [VIII: 2c]; and that show that saying that that which both is an is not an action is performed is erroneous by ". . . The same thing cannot both be and not be so . . ." [VIII: 7c].

11. That which is and is not an agent
Does not perform
That which is and is not an action.
This also should be understood from what has been presented earlier.

That which both is and is not an agent performs neither that which is nor that which is not an action, because in this context the argument—that is, the reasoning presented earlier—shows **[201]** that it is erroneous to say that that which both is and is not an agent acts by ". . . The same thing cannot both be and not be so . . ." [VIII: 7c]; that it is erroneous to say that that which is an action is performed by ". . . that which is an agent has no activity . . ." [2c]; that it is erroneous to say that that which is not an action is performed by " . . . Then the action would be without a cause . . ." [VIII: 3c].

Thus it does not make sense to maintain that the produced, such as consciousness, exists essentially because its causes—actions and agent—exist essentially.

10. Here as well, the first two lines read differently in the *Buddhapālita* [200b]. Tsong khapa is following the Tibetan edition of *Prasannapadā*, which reads *byed pa por ni ma gyur pas / las ni gyur dang bcas pa dang/* while the *Buddhapālita* reads *byed pa po dang las dag ni/ma gyur pa de ni gyur bcas dang//*.

1.2 The mode of positing agent and action conventionally

Some one might say: Since you say that such entities as agent and action are nonexistent, by ascertaining them in that way you fall into deprecation, and by saying that the nonentity of action and agent exist in reality, you fall into fabrication.

> 12. Agent depends upon action.
> Action depends on the agent as well.
> Apart from dependent arising
> One cannot see any cause for their existence.

For *you*, who maintain that entities exist inherently, to say that an entity that existed previously does not exist later is to deprecate all entities, because if they existed essentially it would not be tenable for them ever to be nonexistent. As far as *we* are concerned, since they are dependently arisen, no entities are seen as having essence. Therefore, how could this deprecate either ultimate or conventional existence, since we maintain that nothing at all is ultimately existent, and that, conventionally, all phenomena arise dependently. As it says in *Ratnāvalī,*

> Seeing a mirage one might think that
> There is water here. If, having gone there,
> One says, "There is no water here,"
> Having held this would have been really stupid.
>
> Similarly, one says that this miragelike world
> Exists or does not exist.
> Having held this would be ignorant.
> If there is ignorance there is no liberation. [I: 55, 56]
>
> That which had been previously fabricated by ignorance
> Is later correctly ascertained.
> Then, when an entity is not perceived,
> How could there be a nonentity? [I: 98]

The refutation of grasping things as existing essentially **[202]** is similar to the refutation of regarding a mirage as water. Therefore there is no deprecation. When entities are not seen as existing essentially, how could nonentities—that is, essencelessness—be ultimately existent? For ultimately, no entity is possible. Therefore their entititlessness also does not exist ultimately.

Therefore, only for those who maintain things to be merely conditioned and who accept mundane consciousness to be erroneous, do conventional entities exist like the water in a mirage, but not for anyone else. This is because since that which neither performs nor depends upon action cannot be an agent

Lhejin's being an agent depends on action; that is, it comes into existence depending on that. That which an agent does not perform is not an action. Thus, not only is the agent dependent, but also the action arises—that is, comes into existence—in dependence upon the agent. But apart from that, no inherently existent cause or means is seen.

That shows that the mādhyamika accepts things as existing in mutual dependence and does not maintain that they exist inherently, because this distinguishes between the mādhyamika and the reificationist with regard to their account of their mode of existence, thereby demonstrating their difference with respect to nonexistence as well.

1.3 Applying the argument to other phenomena

> 13. One should understand appropriation in the same way,
> Following the elimination of agent and action.
> Through action and agent
> All remaining things should be understood.

It should also be understood that just as agent and action only exist in mutual dependence and do not exist inherently, since this is appropriated, there is the appropriated—that is, that which is to be appropriated,[11] and that since this appropriates, there is appropriation—that is, the appropriator; and that these are all merely mutually dependent and not inherently existent.

Moreover, suppose one asks: Why do they not exist inherently? The very argument by means of which the inherent existence of the agent and action are eliminated refutes the inherent existence of the appropriator and the appropriated. **[203]** The mode of applying the argument is to apply it to these nonhomogeneous pairs, each of that which is and is not an appropriator and that which is both, and in each case to consider both that which is and is not appropriated and that which is both and to show that each appropriator does not appropriate.

Through the refutation of the essential existence of action and agent not only should the mutual dependence of the two—appropriator and appropriated—be ascertained, but in addition "through action and agent," that is *through the arguments that analyze these two*, "the remaining," that is *all of those entities*, except for the action and appropriation pairs, are established as mutually dependent and their inherent existence is refuted. This should be understood by the wise. This also includes all of these: that which gives rise and that which is given rise to, going and the goer, the seen and the seer, charac-

11. Tsong khapa is explaining that term *nyer len*, which is ambiguous between *appropriation* and *The appropriated*, has the latter sense. The same ambiguity is present in the Sanskrit *upādānam*.

teristics and characterized, that which comes into existence and that which brings it about, and in the same way, part and whole, quality and the qualified; authoritative cognition and cognized, etc.

The mode of application is to apply the argument to the following nonhomogenous pairs: to show that that which is, that which is not, and that which both is and is not something that gives rise to others or causes to go, respectively, does not give rise to or cause to go, respectively, that which is given rise to or goes, that which has not been given rise to or does not go, or both; and to apply it to the following nonhomogeneous pairs: to show that that which is and that which is not and that which both is and is not a part, and that which is and that which is not, and that which both is and is not a qualifier do not constitute or qualify, respectively, that which is and that which is not, and that which both is and is not, a whole or a qualified; and the rest can be treated in a similar way.

Thus the analytic refutations of that which gives rise to others and that which is given rise to in the first chapter, of going and coming in the second chapter, of the seer and the seen in the third chapter, and of characteristic and characterized in the fifth chapter only refute the inherent existence of that which gives rise to others and that which is given rise to, etc. but do not refute their existence. When this is refuted these are established as existing as dependently arisen and as posited in mutual dependence. As authoritative cognition and the cognized are also similar, **[204]** it is not the case that the mutually dependent authoritative cognition and cognized are not accepted, and there is no difference with regard to premises and conclusion as well.

It is the purport of the text that with respect to such things as cause and effect as well, not only are the *words* mutually dependent, but the *referents* are as well, because this is in the context of the refutation of the essential existence of the words "action" and "agents" and their referents just by reason of mutual dependence. Thus, fire is also posited depending on the smoke to which it gives rise. But since it is not posited as inherently existent, as existing through its own power, this is not similar to other systems in which fire is not explained as dependent on smoke.

This should be understood to be applicable in all chapters. Since things have to exist in mutual dependence, they cannot stand on their own in virtue of existing inherently. Thus, essencelessness is thus established just by reasoning from dependent origination. Thus, just by ascertaining causality one destroys all apparitions grasped as truly existent. From that point on, reificationism and nihilism, fabrication and deprecation—all of the antitheses of the right view—are cut off. As long as one does not understand the meaning of "dependent origination" as emptiness of essence thus explained, a residue will remain of the apparitions grasped as truly existent, or, on the other hand, one will not be free from any extremes of reificationism and nihilism, as one could

not have a genuine ascertainment of dependent origination, being uncomfortable with dependent origination in one's own system, as in "with this cause, this arises."

Suppose one said that just by "all remaining things should be understood" the meaning of "appropriated" and "appropriator" would be understood; therefore there is no need to state, "One should understand appropriation in the same way." Although this is true, in order to make it understood that these two constitute the primary focus of the analysis, they are stated separately. **[205]** In the later chapters as well, the analysis of these two occurs frequently.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

In order to show that the arguments that have shown that all actions and agents, including such things as moral and immoral actions and their agents, are essentially empty are corroborated by definitive sūtras, and that this chapter explains all the statements that agents and actions are not perceived, brief indications of corroboration by citations from the definitive sūtras are presented.

The *Upālipariprcchā-sūtra* says

> I have shown fear of hell beings.
> Though many thousands of sentient beings are dismayed,
> Those beings never exist
> Who after death transmigrate to fearful lower realms.
>
> The weapons, like swords and arrows,
> And the harms they cause do not exist.
> Due to conception, those in these lower realms
> See these weapons fall upon them, but they do not exist.
>
> Varieties of beautiful flowers are blooming
> And magnificent golden mansions are seen.
> Here they have no agent
> Because they are simply posited by conception.
>
> The world is fabricated through conception.
> Through grasping what they perceive, fools are identified.
> Neither grasping nor non-grasping occurs.
> They are completely conceptualized, like an illusion or a mirage.
> [*dKon brtsegs* ca 129b]

Thus it is said that those who transmigrate in lower realms, the actions and the agents who harm them and the actions and agents of the divine realms are essentially empty and are explained as conceptually and verbally posited.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

So it should be ascertained that if actions and agents were not merely conceptually posited as existent, and if instead were inherently existent **[206]** as they are taken to be, no agent or action would be tenable, and it should be understood that they exist merely in mutual dependence.

This is the commentary on the eighth chapter, having twelve verses, called "the examination of agent and action."[12]

12. The chapter has thirteen verses, and Tsong khapa comments on all thirteen, but inexplicably says that it has twelve. This error is to be found in Lhasa and Tashi lhunpo as well. It may demonstrate the dangers of leaving these details to one's student assistants!

CHAPTER IX

Examination of the Prior Entity

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Presenting the opponent's position
  1.2 Its refutation
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      1.2.1.1 Refutation of the self fabricated by others
        1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of the existence of the appropriator prior to all of that which is to be appropriated
          1.2.1.1.1.1 Refutation on the grounds that there would be no reason to designate it as an appropriator prior to that which is appropriated
          1.2.1.1.1.2 Refutation on the grounds that if the appropriator existed first, it would lack the appropriated as a basis
        1.2.1.1.2 Refutation of the existence of the appropriator prior to each of the appropriated
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        1.2.1.1.3 Refutation of the argument for the existence of the appropriator prior to the existence of all that which is to be appropriated
      1.2.1.2 The way we posit the self conventionally
        1.2.1.2.1 The mode of positing the self
        1.2.1.2.2 Rebutting refutations of that
    1.2.2 Showing that thereby the inherent existence of that which is to be appropriated is refuted

1.2.3 Rebutting the argument against the inherent nonexistence of the appropriator
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[206:3] We have now completed the discussion of the selflessness of phenomena. The second part of the section on the distinct explanations of the selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of the person is the explanation of the selflessness of the person. It has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the person and the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of the person. This chapter is the first of these two parts. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citation of definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

The first section has two parts: presenting the opponent's position and its refutation.

1.1 Presenting the opponent's position

> 1. Since such things as seeing, hearing,
> And such things as feeling also exist,
> In virtue of them, he who has them
> Also exists prior to them, some say.

Here one might say,

> One should understand appropriation in the same way,
> Following the elimination of agent and action, [VIII: 13ab]

makes no sense, because someone, such as a śrāvaka-Sammitīya might say, since such things as seeing, hearing, and such things as feeling exist, the appropriator who appropriates that which is to be appropriated—that appropriator—must exist prior to that which is appropriated.

> 2. If there were no existent thing
> How could such things as seeing also occur?
> Therefore, prior to this
> There must be an enduring thing.

Their argument is that because Lhejin exists prior to his wealth, he can accumulate wealth, but a barren woman's son cannot. Similarly, if a thing—that is, the previously existing person—did not exist, then how could such

things as seeing—that which the person appropriates—occur? They could not occur. Therefore, they say, prior to these, such things as seeing, this thing—the person, their appropriator—must exist.

The first "such things as"[1] refers to the other four sense faculties and the latter[2] refers to mental processes such as contact, attention, etc. The "and"[3] conjoins the three—hearing, seeing, and feeling—with the sense faculties and the rest of the mental processes that are not mentioned. The "also" is there to confirm that the rest referred to by the occurrences of "such things as" are included here. "In virtue of them" **[207]** refers to the first two lines, which indicate all of the mental processes and mental episodes included there. This is explained in *Prajñāpradīpa* [124a]. Its commentary [*Tarkajvālā*, *dBu ma* dza 148b–149a] says that the five schools, Vātsīputrīya, Bhadrayāṇīya, the Sammitiya, Uttarīya, and the Dharmaguptaka, assert the substantial existence of the person.

1.2 Its refutation

This section has three parts: the refutation of the inherent existence of the appropriator, showing that thereby the inherent existence of that which is to be appropriated is refuted, and rebutting the argument against the inherent nonexistence of the appropriator.

1.2.1 Refutation of the inherent existence of the appropriator

This first part has two sections: refutation of the self fabricated by others and the way we posit the self conventionally.

1.2.1.1 Refutation of the self fabricated by others

This first part has three sections: the refutation of the existence of the appropriator prior to all of that which is to be appropriated, the refutation of the existence of the appropriator prior to each of the appropriated, and the refutation of the argument for the existence of the appropriator prior to the existence of all of that which is to be appropriated.

1. That in IX: 1a.
2. That in IX: 2b.
3. IX: 1b.

1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of the existence of the appropriator prior to all of that which is to be appropriated

This first part has two sections: The refutation on the grounds that there would be no reason to designate it as an appropriator prior to that which is appropriated and the refutation on the grounds that if the appropriator existed first, it would lack the appropriated as a basis.

1.2.1.1.1.1 Refutation on the grounds that there would be no reason to designate it as an appropriator prior to that which is appropriated

If the appropriator existed inherently, there are only three alternatives: the appropriator is prior to, simultaneous with, or subsequent to the appropriated. The second and third alternatives will be refuted later. The first—that the appropriator exists prior to that which is to be appropriated—is refuted here.

> 3. If something existed prior to
> Such things as
> Seeing, hearing and feeling,
> How could it be designated?

Since there is no ground for calling any entity—that is, a person—an appropriator that exists prior to such things as seeing, hearing, and such things as feeling, no such thing can be designated as a person in general or as a seer or another such thing, in particular. The ground for applying the term "person" to something is something such as seeing. If the person were prior to those, it would not be dependent on such things as seeing, like a pot or cloth. Whatever does not depend on its own cause would be without a cause, because it would be like a rich man **[208]** not depending on his wealth, etc. Such a thing does not exist.

Here, this does not mean that if they are sequential, the earlier one does not depend on the later, because in our own system all causes and effects are maintained to be mutually dependent. Thus, the person presented as a seer, etc., would have to be so categorized in virtue of dependence on such things as seeing. If the appropriator—which depends on such things as seeing—existed inherently, then it would always have to be dependent. At the time when the appropriator exists, without the basis of dependence—such things as seeing—it would follow that that which depends on them would not exist. In general this can refute their dependence as well.

1.2.1.1.1.2 Refutation on the grounds that if the appropriator existed first, it would lack the appropriated as a basis

Suppose one thought that even without such things as seeing—that is, prior to them—the person who endures prior to them appropriates such things as seeing.

> 4. If it can endure
> Without such things as seeing,
> Then, without a doubt they also
> Can exist without it.

There is an additional error here. If that were the case, prior to his possession of wealth, Lehjin, remaining separate from the wealth, could accumulate wealth as a separate entity. Similarly, with regard to the appropriator, even without the person, such things as seeing could, without a doubt, exist as separate entites.

> 5. By what is someone disclosed?
> By whom is something disclosed?
> Without something, how can someone exist?
> Without someone, how can something exist?

This cannot be maintained, because just as it is said that this person is the appropriator of such things as these eyes, one can ask "by what"—that is, by the appropriated seeing, etc.—is "someone" (that is, the appropriating person)[4] "disclosed"—that is, made to appear and be known? Just as it is said that such things as these eyes are that which is to be appropriated by this person, one can ask "by whom"—that is, by which appropriating person—"is something," that is, the appropriated seeing, etc.—"disclosed?" In that case, without depending on "something"—that is, that which is to be appropriated—"how can someone" (that is, the appropriator) "exist?" It cannot. Without depending on the appropriator, "how could something exist," that is, that which is to be appropriated? It cannot. Therefore, these two exist in mutual dependence.

If without the appropriator, such things as seeing were accepted separately, **[209]** since there would be nothing such as the eye as the basis, things such as seeing could not exist. This is also, as was explained earlier, an argument showing that it would not make sense for them to be inherently separate. According to the *Buddhapālita*, in response to "How could you designate it?"

4. *bdag*. We usually translate this term as *self*. But in this chapter Tsong khapa sometimes clearly uses it to mean *person*. We translate it both ways here, depending on context.

[IX: 3d] the meaning of the two lines "If it could endure . . . " [IX: 4ab] is explained to be that without such things as seeing it would exist entirely by itself. This then demonstrates that in that case, even without the person, such things as seeing could, without a doubt, exist entirely by themselves; and in that case, in response to the question, "so what is the error?" the two lines "By what . . . " [IX: 5ab] explain that these two disclose each other, and for this reason the next two lines [IX: 5cd] explain that neither of these two can exist without the other. These explain that since, without a ground for designating it as an appropriator, and without the basis of that which is to be appropriated, the appropriator itself cannot exist as inherently separate from such things as the seeing. [203a]

1.2.1.1.2 Refutation of the existence of the appropriator prior to each of the appropriated

This part has two sections: the presentation of the opponent's view and its refutation.

1.2.1.1.2.1 Presentation of the opponent's view

6. Nothing exists prior to
All of such things as seeing.
Another one of such things as seeing
Discloses another at another time.

One might argue as follows: If the person were accepted as existing prior to all of such things as seeing, those errors would ensue; however, although an appropriator that is "prior to *all* of such things as seeing" does not exist, one that is prior to *each* does exist. Therefore, when that which is to be appropriated—such as the visual sense faculty among "such things as seeing"—discloses the person, then "at *another* time" "*another*" sense faculty "discloses" it, but does not disclose it at *this* time. When, depending on seeing, it is designated, it is not designated in dependence on hearing. Therefore, it exists even before that which is it to be appropriated. Therefore, there would not be the error that there is no ground for designating it as a person.

By this one would mean that earlier it has been said that the appropriator exists prior to the appropriated; **[210]** but it was not said that it exists prior to all of such things as seeing. Thus the absurd consequence does not follow that something is designated as a person without any ground, because it is not maintained that it exists prior to all of them. This refutes the assertion that the present person is the appropriator and that such things as his eyes are that which is to be appropriated. Therefore, the meaning of "appropriator" and "that

which is to be appropriated" in this context is not the person of the previous life appropriating the body of the person in the next life. Well, then, what is the meaning of "the person appropriates such things as seeing?" We maintain that when the person becomes the seer of material form and the visual faculty becomes the instrument, the latter is appropriated by the former, and at that time it exists simultaneously with the visual faculty, and it is prior to such things as the auditory faculty. The others should be understood in the same way.

1.2.1.1.2.2 Its refutation

7. If it does not exist
Prior to *all* of such things as seeing,
How could it exist
Prior to *each* of such things as seeing?

If that person did not exist prior to *all* of such things as seeing, how could that person exist prior to *each* of such things as seeing? Its existence would not make any sense because it is just like this: since the forest does not exist prior to all of the trees, it does not exist prior to each of them either; and since all of the grains of sand together do not have the potential to yield mustard oil, nor do each of them.

Moreover, if it were maintained that it exists prior to each of them, it would have to be asserted that it exists prior to all of them because apart from each of them, the totality of them does not exist. For example, if you speak to each of the people there, without leaving anyone out, then you have spoken to all of the people there. Similarly, if the person exists prior to each of seeing, etc., without leaving any of them out, then you can conclude that it exists prior to all of them.

Suppose someone replies as follows: It exists prior to all of them as they occur in temporal order. **[211]** However, we do not maintain that when it exists as prior to all of them at a particular time, such as prior to seeing, it exists prior to all of the rest. Therefore, there is no contradiction.

8. If the seer itself is the hearer itself,
And the feeler, then
For it to exist prior to each of these
Would make no sense.

There is no error in the context of the refutation of the essential existence of the appropriator and that which is to be appropriated. This argument also shows that it does not make sense for it to exist prior to each of them for the following reason: For one person to be prior to each of such things as seeing,

it would have to be that very seer and the hearer as well as the feeler; but this would not make any sense, because a seer which lacks the action of hearing would have to be a hearer and a hearer which lacks the action of seeing would have to be a seer. Since each action must have a separate agent, to say that the seer itself is the hearer itself in that case would make no sense. Although conventionally, it can be accepted that one Lhejin sits in front of ten people who sit in order, if one maintained that the very Lhejin who sits in front of the first person also sits in front of the second person, then one would have to maintain that the very seer, while it saw material form earlier, is the hearer when it hears sound later.

You might think that although it has to be like that, since the opponent does not maintain this, the refutation does not make sense. *Pramāṇavārtika*, addressing the Vātsīputrīya, says,

> What is by nature not destroyed
> The wise call permanent.
> Therefore abandon this embarrassing view
> And call it permanent. [[II: 205] *Tshad ma* ce 115a]

Similarly, as it says above, since it is maintained that that very person that exists prior to the eye later exists prior to the auditory sense faculty without disintegration, they can be charged with the error of accepting such assertions. However, here, **[212]** if the person existed inherently, one could not escape two alternatives with respect to the seer and the hearer: They would have to be either inherently identical or different. Their being different will be refuted later. If they were identical, the very entity that existed earlier, before a phenomenon, must endure so as to exist before the second phenomenon as well. Therefore, "if the seer itself is . . . " is the critique of those who maintain that it exists prior to each in order as well.

> 9. If the seer is distinct,
> The hearer is distinct, and the feeler is distinct,
> Then when there is a seer there would also be a hearer,
> And there would have to be many persons.

If, having seen that the previously explained critique applies to the assertion that the seer itself is the hearer, one maintained that the seer, the hearer and the feeler are inherently different, one would have to maintain that when the seer exists, the hearer would have to exist at the same time. However, since that is not maintained, they do not inherently exist separately. Moreover, if one maintained what was asserted earlier, one person would have to have several selves, because the seers, etc., would inherently exist separately.

1.2.1.1.3 Refutation of the argument for the existence of the appropriator prior to the existence of all of that which is to be appropriated

Suppose he continues as follows: The self exists prior to all of such things as seeing. But there is no error of designating it as a self without a ground, because at the time of name and form, which is prior to such things as seeing—as it said that through name and form as its conditions, the six faculties arise—the four elements from which such things as seeing arise must exist. Therefore, prior to such things as seeing, the appropriator of the four elements, that is the self, exists.

> 10. Such things as seeing, hearing,
> And feeling,
> And the elements from which they are arisen:
> These do not exist.

The self does not exist inherently in such things as seeing, hearing, and feeling nor in that from which they are arisen—that is, the four elements. If the self existed inherently, it would not be tenable for it to be the appropriator of the elements, since it would have to be simultaneous with or subsequent to them. Therefore, it would have to be prior to the elements. In that case, the errors previously explained, **[213]** such as designating the self without a ground, would be committed. The critique is not presented explicitly here.

1.2.1.2 The way we posit the self conventionally

This part has two sections: the mode of positing the self and rebutting refutations of that.

1.2.1.2.1 The mode of positing the self

One might ask, if the inherent existence of the person is refuted, then would the conventions regarding the person who sees and hears not be untenable?

> 11. Such things as seeing, hearing,
> And feeling:
> If that to which they belong does not exist,
> They themselves do not exist.

No one who is not insane would reject the existence of the person who is the agent of such things as seeing and hearing. Therefore its total nonexistence makes no sense. Here, the other schools maintain that the person who sees and hears undoubtedly has to be accepted. However, seeing that it is untenable for it to be the same entity as the aggregates, they maintain that the personal self is a different entity from the aggregates.

Other Buddhist schools see the need to posit that mere person who accumulates karma, and so forth. Seeing the error in taking the self to be an entity existing separate from the aggregates, some assert that the continuum of the collection of the aggregates is the person, and some assert that the consciousness that appropriates and abandons the body is the self or the person.

As far as our own system is concerned, the object that is the basis of the objectification by innate self-grasping should be posited as "I," or the self or person. Even the animals, who do not hold the view that the person exists as it is imputed by the non-Buddhist schools, have the view of "I" and the transitory aggregates with respect to grasping "*being mine*." Therefore, a self which is different from the aggregates cannot the basis of objectification by innate self-grasping, and it is maintained that it does not exist even conventionally. As it is said in *Madhyamakāvatāra*,

> It makes no sense for this to be the basis of self-grasping.
> It is not maintained that this even exists conventionally. [VI: 122cd]

and also

> Ordinary people do not even maintain this as the basis of the self-grasping mind.
> Because without being aware of that, the self is still seen. [VI: 124 cd] **[214]**

According to mundane convention, since everyone says "my body," or "my mind" the self is held to be the master and the aggregates are seen as its servants. Therefore, it would be unreasonable to posit the continuum of the aggregates, the collection of the aggregates, or any part of it as an instance of a self.

In the master's texts, it is explained in exactly this way. In this chapter it is explained which of such things as the seer discloses which kind of self; therefore, it would be contradictory for any part of, or the whole collection of that which discloses to be that which is disclosed; in the tenth chapter, therefore, the way in which the self is the same as or different from the aggregates is presented as similar to fire and fuel; in the last chapter it says,

> When it is said that there is no self
> Other than the appropriator,
> If the self were the appropriator
> Your self would be nonexistent. [XXVII: 5]

1.2.1.2.2 Rebutting refutations of that

One might ask, "If the self and the aggregates are taken as master and servant, would not these two be grasped as different entities?" Grasping these two as substantially separate is not part of mundane convention. Otherwise, when Lhejin's hand hurts and then is cured, this would not be regarded as Lhejin hurting and then being cured. This is because when Nyerbey is hurt and then cured there is no convention whereby we say that Jampa is hurt and then cured. This argument represents a rearrangement of this verse from *Madhyamakāvatāra*:

> It is known that in everyday life, people say, "By sowing the seed
> I gave rise to this son,"
> And that they think, "I have planted the tree."
> Therefore arising from another is not even accepted in everyday life.
> [VI: 32]

As presented here:

> It is known that in everyday life, people say, "This hand hurts,"
> And that they thereby think "I hurt."
> Therefore that these two are substantially different
> Is not even accepted in everyday life.

Therefore, when we search for the basis of designation of the self or person as other than its being merely nominally imputed, **[215]** since it is neither found to be identical with nor different from the aggregates, etc., it is merely designated as a self depending on the aggregates.

Someone might argue as follows: It is said that when one's hand is hurt and then cured, the person is hurt and then cured, and since that person would also say "my hand was hurt and then cured," is the same hand not posited both as "I" and as "that which is mine?" This statement arises from not understanding the meaning of "mundane convention" because its meaning is as follows: When the hand is hurt and then cured, the self is regarded as hurt and then cured; but the meaning is *not* that the hand is regarded as the self, because it is not held that "the hand is me."

The self that is the basis of Lhejin's holding "I am," without distinguishing between the temporally successive selves, is the mere self with which one is

involved from beginningless time. The selves of each of the transmigrators, when they appropriate the bodies of such things as gods, are instances of the previously explained mere self. The self grasped by Lhejin as the self of each of his lives when he says "I am," is in part the self of each life. Just as the object (the self), the subject—the self-grasping mind—should also be understood as having a mode of apprehension, whether or not individual distinctions are drawn.

Such a self—one that is not merely nominally imputed—cannot be found at all if the object of imputation is sought. So one might say, it makes no sense that it accumulates actions and experiences their effects, etc. In that case, since when such imputed objects such as material form are sought—which objects are taken to be not merely nominally imputed—they, like the self, cannot be found either as identical to or as different from their respective parts, it would be impossible for them to perform functions.

The imputed and the substantially existing self are similar in that when they are sought they are not found. However, they are not similar with respect to whether in virtue of not being found, they are done away with or not. **[216]** This is because the substantially existent self must be able to withstand rational analysis, but the imputed is not like that.

1.2.2 Showing that thereby the inherent existence of that which is to be appropriated is refuted

One might argue as follows: Although the self has been refuted in this way, it might be that such things as seeing exist essentially, because they have not thus been refuted. If they exist, there would be no relation between such things as seeing and such things as pots, and between other such objects and other senses which do not have the nature of self; and therefore the self, which *is* related to them, would exist inherently.

> 12. That which does not exist prior to,
> Simultaneous with, or after seeing does not exist.
> Conceptions such as "it exists" or "it does not exist"
> Will cease.

When it was shown that the appropriator of such things as seeing, hearing and feeling—which are that which is to be appropriated by the appropriator—does not exist inherently, was it not even shown that those things such as seeing do not exist essentially as well? Since those things such as seeing—that which is to be appropriated—do not exist inherently, nor does the self—the appropriator—exist inherently.

1.2.3 Rebutting the argument against the inherent nonexistence of the appropriator

Here the opponent, thinking that the absence of inherent existence of the person is not the mere elimination of the object of negation, but an internal negation, asks, "have you really ascertained that there is no self?" Who would say such a thing? Has not it been said just before this that since there is no thing such as seeing, there is no self? It *has* been said, but we do not intend the meaning that you ascribe to it. Here you imagine that the self exists inherently. I[5] also, as an antidote for that grasping, have said "the self does not exist inherently," using this phrase—which merely eliminates the object of negation—to undo that grasping. But setting aside eliminating the object of negation, the essencelessness of the self is not conceived as the object of the rational mind because both fixation on entity and on nonentity has to be eliminated. **[217]**

These kinds of arguments distinguish between external and internal negations. However, this is not a distinctive feature of the prāsaṅgika, because, as it has been said many times earlier, the person should be maintained to be as it is put in the *Catuḥśataka* where it says,

> Your self is not my self
> Because he does ascertain it as not his self.
> Does not that conception arise
> With respect to impermanent phenomena? [X: 3]

This means that if the self existed inherently, just as one person grasps it thinking "I," all others as well should certainly grasp *it*. But the self with respect to which your self-grasping arises is not that with respect to which my self-grasping arises. This argument shows that *that* self does not exist inherently, because it is certainly not the case that everyone's self-grasping arises with respect to *it*.

Someone might ask, if there is no self, with respect to what does self-grasping arise? Besides the impermanent aggregates there is no object of self-grasping. It is not tenable that that just is the aggregates. Therefore, the very self that is imputed in dependence on impermanent aggregates is grasped by the conception "I am." Thus, the fact that the self does not exist inherently and that it is not the case that there is no mere dependent designation is also presented by "That which does not . . . " [IX: 12].

When the self is thoroughly examined, it is not that which is prior to such

5. The first person singular pronoun is used in *Prasannapadā* [67b], which this section follows closely, and so should not be read as referring to Tsong khapa, but to Candrakīrti.

things as seeing, because there is no ground for designating any such thing a self. Similarly, it does not inherently exist simultaneously with such things as seeing, because since they do not each exist inherently, they cannot be seen to exist inherently simultaneously. Moreover, if they each did exist inherently, then since the self and the appropriated would not be mutually dependent, their individual existence would therefore not be tenable. It also cannot be that such things as seeing are prior and the self later, because without an agent **[218]** there cannot be any action. Thus, since that is not the case, the idea that the self exists inherently is eliminated. Since it is disclosed by such things as seeing, the idea that there is no person is also eliminated.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

In order to show that that which has been established—that the person, the appropriator, and that which is to be appropriated by it do not to exist inherently—is corroborated by the profound scriptures, and in order to show that all of the scriptures on similar subjects are explained by this chapter, corroboration from definitive sūtras can be found in the corroboration section of the chapter "Examination of Motion" (chapter 2), and they should be understood in the same way here.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

Having ascertained that if that to which the statements, "the appropriator of this body is this person" and "that which is appropriated by this person are the phenomena," refer existed as they are grasped—as existing inherently—and were not merely posited by nominal convention, then there could not be any convention with regard to appropriator and appropriated, one should contemplate the consistency of these two in virtue of their being merely nominally imputed and dependently originated.

This is the commentary on the ninth chapter, having twelve verses, called "the examination of the prior entity."

CHAPTER X

Examination of Fire and Fuel

Chapter Outline

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            1.1.1.2.1.1.1 Primary refutation
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1.1.1.2.2.1.2 Refutation of dependence through analysis of whether or not dependent phenomena exist
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1.1.2 Refutation through arguments presented earlier
1.1.3 Their conclusion
1.2 Applying this reasoning to other phenomena
1.3 Condemnation of their view of the point of the refutation
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[218:16] We are still in the second part of the second major portion of the text, the extensive explanation of the two selflessnesses, and within that, the distinct explanations of the selflessness of phenomena and the selflessness of the person. We are in the second section of that part—the explanation of the selflessness of the person. We have completed the first of its two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the person. We are now beginning the second part: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of the person. This section has two parts: The refutation of the example in the premises and the refutation of the reasoning in the premises. This chapter is the first of these two parts. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citation of definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here someone might say it does not make sense to say that the appropriator and appropriated do not exist inherently in virtue of being mutually dependent, **[219]** because dependent entities are seen to exist inherently. Although fire arises in dependence on fuel, the essences of heat and combustibility are seen as the effect; and although fuel depends upon fire, that which is burned has the essence of the four great elements. Therefore, like fire and fuel, both that which is appropriated and the appropriator also exist inherently.

The refutation of this has three parts: the refutation of the inherent existence of fire and fuel, applying this reasoning to other phenomena, and condemnation of their view of the point of the refutation.

1.1 Refutation of the inherent existence of fire and fuel

This section has three parts: refutation through arguments not presented earlier, refutation through arguments presented earlier, and their conclusion.

1.1.1 Refutation through arguments not presented earlier

This section has two parts: refutation of their being essentially identical and refutation of their being essentially different.

1.1.1.1 Refutation of their being essentially identical

1. If fuel were fire,
Agent and object would be one.
If fire were different from fuel,
Then it could arise without fuel.

If both fire and fuel existed inherently, they would have to be either identical or different, because if you eliminate one of these two—identical and different—the other one must be affirmed. Therefore the third alternative is eliminated.

The agent of the burning of the object—that which is to be burned, such as the fuel—is the fire. With respect to this, if that which is fuel and fire were inherently identical, then the agent and object would be identical. But this makes no sense, because it is neither seen nor accepted that the potter and the pot, or that which is to be cut and the cutter, are identical. Contraposing this reductio yields the argument from the premise that they are agent and object to the conclusion that fire and fuel cannot be inherently identical.

1.1.1.2 Refutation of their being essentially different

The second has two parts: the refutation of the conclusion that they are essentially different and the refutation of the argument for their being essentially different. **[220]**

1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of the conclusion that they are essentially different

The first section has two parts: If they were essentially different it would not depend upon the fuel and if they were essentially different it would not contact the fuel.

1.1.1.2.1.1 If they were essentially different it would not depend upon the fuel

This first section has two parts: the primary refutation and resolving the uncertainties.

1.1.1.2.1.1.1 Primary refutation

This first part has two sections: fire arising without fuel and reductio on fire burning eternally.

1.1.1.2.1.1.1.1 Fire arising without fuel

If fire were inherently different from fuel, then fire would not depend on the fuel because the cloth, for example, which is different from the pot, is seen not to be dependent on the pot. This refutes the untenability of drawing the distinction between the possibility of seeing the cloth without the pot and the impossibility of seeing fire without fuel, on the grounds that they are equally independent, and that it makes no sense for something to depend on that which is inherently different. The refutation of arising from another is that if something arose from another on which it was not dependent, since everything is similar in respect of being different, there would be no distinction between that from which it arises and that from which it does not. Thus it is not the case that there is no difference between the arguments.

1.1.1.2.1.1.1.2 Reductio on fire burning eternally

2. It would be forever aflame;
   Ignition could occur without a cause.
   Effort regarding it would be pointless.
   In that case, it would also be without any action.

3. Since it would not depend on another,
   Ignition would be without a cause.
   If it were eternally in flames,
   Effort regarding it would be pointless.

Moreover, if fire were inherently different from fuel, it would be eternally burning and it would arise without any cause of ignition. Making an effort regarding it would be pointless, and in that case there would be no action

either. The meaning is presented as follows: If fire were inherently different from fuel, this fire would not depend on fuel. But here, since the fire is ignited, that which ignites it is the fuel. Therefore, it would not arise from a cause of ignition.

Fire depending on that which ignites it would extinguish without that cause. That which does not depend on it would burn eternally, since the conditions for its extinguishing are not complete. If it burned eternally, then all of the effort to prevent its extinguishment, such as collecting fuel, igniting it, etc., would be pointless. **[221]** In that case, even without the action of burning, fire would be the agent of burning. But there is no agent without an action. Therefore it makes no sense for fire to be inherently different from fuel. Here also it should be understood that the contrapositive of the reductio supplies a premise that proves the nonexistence of otherness.

1.1.1.2.1.1.2 Resolving the uncertainties

> 4. So, if one thought that
> That which is burning is the fuel,

If the fire were different from the fuel, then the fire would arise without fuel. In reply to this one might think that the flaming object is the fuel that is being burned by the fire and that the fire is perceived as depending on it, but not in isolation from it. Therefore the error of saying that fire arises without fuel is not committed.

> 4cd. If it is just this,
> By what is this fuel being burned?

In that case, if the fuel is just that which is flaming and being burned, then, since there is no fire that is inherently different from it, by what fire inherently different from fuel is this fuel being burned? The burning makes no sense. Therefore, since the flaming fuel does not exist inherently the error is unavoidable. The *Catuḥśataka* clarifies this argument:

> Since heat is fire—that which burns,[1]
> If it is not hot, how can it burn?
> Therefore there is no so-called fuel.
> But apart from that there is no fire.[2] [XIV: 16]

1. That is, for something to be hot is for it to have the fire element.

2. Tsong khapa has *mes ni tsha ba nyid sreg ste/tsha ba ma yin ji ltar sreg/des na bud shing zhes bya med/de ma gtogs par me yang med//,* whereas sDe dge reads *tsha ba me nyid du 'gyur ste/tsha ba min pa ji ltar sreg/des na bud shing zhes bya ba/yod min de med me yod min//*. but there is not much difference in meaning. [*dBu ma tsha* 15b]

1.1.1.2.1.2 If they were essentially different it would not contact the fuel

This section has two parts: the main point and resolving the uncertainties.

1.1.1.2.1.2.1 The main point

> 5. Because of difference, they do not touch. If they do not touch,
> It will not be burned. If it is not burned,
> It will not be extinguished. If it is not extinguished,
> It will endure with its own identity as well.

Moreover, it would follow from fire being inherently different from fuel that they do not touch each other, just as it does not touch darkness. If there is no contact, as it will remain distant, it will not burn the fuel. In that case, it would not make sense to say that that which is burning is fuel. If it is not burned, it will not be extinguished, because if the fire burns the fuel, then since that which is burned is extinguished by being exhausted, **[222]** there would be no cause for extinguishing that which is not burned. If it is not extinguished, it would endure with the identity of that which is flaming.

If the words "as well" are taken as meaning *ascertaining from the three,*[3] it would mean that it would endure with its own identity, or it could mean that the fire is not absolutely different from the fuel. If, on the other hand, we take them as indicating an alternative, they could mean any of "does not touch," etc. If their meaning is taken as inclusive, they mean not *only* this, but also the previous conditions, such as "does not touch." Therefore, the statement "it doesn't make sense for fire to be different from fuel" [*Prasannapadā* 70A] presents the contrapositive of those reductios.

1.1.1.2.1.2.2 Resolving the uncertainties

> 6. Just as a man touches a woman
> And a woman touches a man,
> So if fire were different from fuel,
> Fire and fuel would have to be suited to touch.

This says that "Because of difference, they do not touch. If they do not touch," etc., does not make sense, because although the fire is different from

3. The three conditions mentioned in this verse.

the fuel, it is suited to touch the fuel. This is because it is just as, for instance, a man touches a woman and a woman touches a man. According to the latest translations, this verse is treated as a response. But Cog Ro[4] translates this in both the *Buddhapālita* [206b] and the *Prajñāpradīpa* [33a] as the opponent's view and his translation,

> Although fire is different from fuel
> It would have to be suited to touch fuel, [6cd]

is very felicitous.[5]

> 7. And, if fire and fuel
> Preclude each other,
> Then although fire is different from fuel,
> It still must be asserted that they touch.

If fire and fuel preclude each other—if they are not, like a man and a woman, mutually dependent—then although fire would be different from fuel it would be asserted that it touches the fuel,[6] but that is not possible. Therefore, the example is senseless: It *would* make sense to give an example of two things that are mutually dependent and touch each other, but that is not what is presented.

1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of the argument for their being essentially different

This section has two parts: the refutation of the argument for their dependence and the refutation of the argument that it is directly perceptible.

1.1.1.2.2.1 Refutation of the argument for their dependence

Someone might say that fire and fuel, like man and woman, are not mutually independent, but are instead dependent. **[223]** Therefore, they might say, these two *do* exist inherently, because the nonexistent barren woman's son and daughter are not seen to be mutually dependent.

4. Cog ro klu yi gyel mtshan.

5. *gal te shing las me gzhan yang/shing dang phrad du rung bar 'gyur/* vs *gal te shing las me gzhan na/ shing dang phrad du rung bar 'gyur/* in the sDe dge translation of the root text and of *Prasannapadā*, a translation which is better supported by the Sanskrit *anya evendhanādagnirindhnam prāpnuyād yadi.* [Bauddhabhāratī, *Madhyamakaśāstra of Nāgārjuna,* 90].

6. Tsong khapa's text is ambiguous here. One could read *'dod pa rag na* as *to assert* as we have it in the verse or as *desire*. The sense of the context supports the former, but the Sanskrit in *Prasannapadā* is *kāma*, and *Prajñāpradīpa* comments on it as *desire*, reading */phrad par 'dod rag na/* [133b].

This section has three parts: the refutation of dependence through analysis with respect to the three temporal periods, the refutation of dependence through analysis of whether or not dependent phenomena exist, and the refutation of both dependence and independence.

1.1.1.2.2.1.1 Refutation of dependence through analysis with respect to the three temporal periods

This section has two parts: the refutation of sequential dependence and the refutation of simultaneous dependence.

1.1.1.2.2.1.1.1 Refutation of sequential dependence

> 8. If fire exists in dependence on fuel,
> And fuel exists in dependence on fire,
> Depending on what do fire and fuel exist?
> Which one exists first?

If one said that the fire is the agent of burning this wood, then the fire is posited as depending on the fuel. And if one said that this fuel is being burned by this fire, then the fuel is posited as depending on the fire. But depending on what do both the fire and the fuel occur? And which of these two is first—that is, the one on which the other depends? Thinking that the fuel exists first and the fire occurs in dependence on that would not make sense, because that which is not burning is not fuel. Otherwise, the absurd consequence would follow that anything, like grass, would be fuel.

This whole discussion is intended to show that if fuel existed inherently, then it would have to touch the fire; but we do not maintain that *mere* fuel is like that because many sequences of agent and action are posited conventionally. To think that the fire exists first and the fuel exists in dependence on that would not make sense either because there is no fire existing prior to the fuel; and if there were, it would arise without a cause, and there would be no need to depend on the fuel later.

> 9. If fire exists in dependence on fuel,
> It would be the establishment of an established fire,
> And the fuel would also exist
> Without there being any fire.

Suppose fire is posited in dependence on previously existing fuel. Then, since it would not make sense for nonestablished fire to be dependent, only an existent fire can depend. And so, a fire that has already been established

would have to be established again, but the fire does not need to depend on anything further. Moreover, suppose fire is posited in dependence on previously existing fuel. "And the fuel would also exist" means the fuel.[7] **[224]** It would have to exist without fire, but this makes no sense.

According to Buddhapālita [207a], the previous verse (X: 8) asks which exists first. The first two lines of this verse, "If fire exists in dependence," [9ab], refute the prior existence of fuel; and the next two lines—"And the fuel would also exist" [9cd]—refute the previous existence of fire. He concludes that if these two phenomena, which are maintained to be dependent, did not exist, it would not be tenable for them to depend and so they must exist. If they existed sequentially, then since fire could exist without fuel, there would be no point in its depending on fuel; and since fuel could exist without fire as well, there would be no point in its depending on fire.

Here we have refuted the inherent existence of the dependent. Having shown that one cannot escape the two alternatives of their being simultaneous or sequential as the general point, based on this disjunctive superordinate category, he demonstrates two contradictions: He refutes their being sequential by showing that when the former exists the latter does not, and that when the latter exists, the former does not. He also refutes the inherent existence of the dependent by showing that both the dependent phenomenon and the basis of dependence would always have to exist simultaneously.

1.1.1.2.2.1.1.2 Refutation of simultaneous dependence

Suppose someone says, "The fire exists in virtue of the simultaneous existence of the fuel, and the fuel also exists in virtue of the simultaneous existence of the fire. Therefore since we do not assert that one exists before the other, we do not commit that error."

> 10. If an entity that depends on another
> Exists in dependence on
> That on which it depends,
> What exists in dependence on what?

Suppose the entity of fire that exists in dependence on the entity of fuel exists. Since the fuel exists depending on fire itself, which is the phenomenon depending on fuel—"that on which it depends," that is, the ground of depen-

7. *bud par bya ba'i shing* in the Tibetan (9c) is a synonymous expansion for meter of *bud shing*. We have translated it as *fuel* in the verse, though lexically it would be *that wood which is to be burned*. Tsong khapa is pointing out in the commentary that this expanded phrase just means *fuel*. Translational matters are further confused because he also uses *shing* (*wood*) as a contracted synonym for *bud (fuel)*. All three of these terms translate the same Sanskrit term *indhanam*.

dence, which is fuel—we now ask, "What exists in dependence on what?" Consider, for example, a boat in the water, that in order not to drift, depends on another boat. But it cannot be that two boats both adrift rely on one another for safety. Similarly, to establish that a fire endures inherently, you say that it depends on fuel. And to establish that fuel exists inherently, you say that it depends on fire. **[225]** Thus it cannot be that either of these exist inherently.

In our own system, precisely because of the necessity that the existence of any one thing is dependent upon that of another, they cannot exist inherently. It would be contradictory for the totally nonexistent horns of a rabbit to be dependent. This thus establishes that all things are free from the two extremes of inherent existence and complete nonexistence.

1.1.1.2.2.1.2 Refutation of dependence through analysis of whether or not dependent phenomena exist

> 11. If the entity that exists through dependence
> Does not exist, how could it depend?
> However, if you say that the existent depends,
> That dependence makes no sense.

The entity of fire that exists in dependence on the entity of fuel is not free from the two extremes of existence and nonexistence. If it is nonexistent, how could it depend on fuel? It would not depend on it, like the horn of a rabbit.

Suppose he said instead that the existent depends. Then it would not make sense for the fire, existing inherently, to depend on the fuel, because, although for a *mere* existent to be dependent, it does not need to depend on anything once again; if something inherently existent were dependent, it would never be independent. Therefore, there would be no point in its depending on another once again. Discussing entities in general in the context of fire and fuel, it is intended that through this examination all other phenomena are examined, as it is said below "together with such things as the pot and cloth" [X:15c].

1.1.1.2.2.1.3 Refutation of both dependence and independence

By reasoning in this way, if we examine thoroughly how things stand, fire, depending on fuel, does not exist inherently, because it is not tenable for fire and fuel to depend on one another, whether they are existent or nonexistent.

> 12. Fire is not dependent on fuel
> Fire is not independent of fuel.
> Fuel is not dependent on fire.
> Fuel is not independent of fire.

Moreover, there is no fire that is not dependent on fuel, because its being different has already been refuted,[8] and the absurd consequence would follow that it would be causeless. Fuel, depending on fire, does not exist inherently, because it is not tenable that fire and fuel depend on one another, whether they are existent or nonexistent. There is also no fuel independent of fire. If something is not burning, it is not tenable that it is fuel.

1.1.1.2.2.2 Refutation of the argument that it is directly perceptible

Suppose someone asked, "Why do we need these subtle analyses? We simply say that anyone can directly perceive that the fire is burning the fuel, and so it follows that fire and fuel exist inherently." **[226]**

> 13. Fire does not come from something else.
> Nor is fire even in fuel.

Here, if fire existed inherently, then it would have to come from something other than fuel, or from fuel itself. But fire does not come from anything other than fuel because such things are not seen. Even if this did occur, without fuel as a cause it would be causeless, and if it came from the fuel, it would not have to come as fire. Moreover, this case is similar to the critical analysis of the fuel, according to which a vicious infinite regress follows. Nor does the fire exist even in the fuel, because it is not perceived.

1.1.2 Refutation through arguments presented earlier

> 13d. Moreover, everything else concerning fuel is presented through
> Where one has gone, where one has not gone, and where one goes.

In the context of fuel, the rest of the refutations should be understood by rearranging the previously presented arguments with respect to where one has gone, where one has not gone, and where one goes:

> Whatever has been burned is not burning [see II: 1a]

and

> What has been burned needs no effort to burn. [II: 12a]

8. The first three verses of this chapter.

and

> That which is a burner does not burn. [II: 15a]

1.1.3 Their conclusion

> 14. Fuel itself is not fire.
> Fire is in nothing other than fuel.
> Fire does not possess fuel.
> Fuel is not in fire, nor vice versa.

Here, in brief, is the point of the previous explanations: Fuel itself is not fire, because it would follow that agent and object would be identical. Fire is "in nothing other than"—that is, not in anything else but—fuel, because this would entail errors such as the assertion that fire arises in the absence of fuel. Fire does not possess fuel inherently because if it were a state of affairs in which they had a identical nature, like Lhejin's possessing a mind, then the previous arguments refuting identity would refute this as well, and if it were a state of affairs in which they had different natures, like Lhejin's possessing a cow, then the previous arguments refuting difference would refute it. Through those refutations of identity and difference, these are implicitly refuted.[9]

The fuel does not inherently depend on fire, because it would have to be like jujube fruit in a basket, and this is also refuted by the refutation of difference. Fire does not inherently exist in fuel **[227]** because that also has been refuted through the refutation of difference. And so the refutations both of things depending and being dependent have been implicitly presented earlier.

1.2 Applying this reasoning to other phenomena

> 15. Through the discussion of fire and fuel,
> The order of self and appropriation,
> Together with the pot and cloth, all
> Without remainder have been explained.

Since it is the object of self-grasping, the ego is posited and constructed as the self and so it is called the self. Since it is to be appropriated there is "appropriation." The order in which these two—"All of the process,"[10] "without remainder"—proceed should be understood to have been explained by the fire and fuel. What is the difference between "all" and "without remainder?" Saying

9. X: 1, X: 2–3.
10. That is, of the two of them—self and appropriation—coming into existence.

"all" means applying what we said immediately above about the five alternatives with respect to identity and difference, etc. [X: 14], without leaving anything out, to both self and appropriation, just like fire and fuel. Saying "without remainder" means applying all of the arguments explained earlier refuting the five alternatives to the refutation of the five alternatives with respect to self and appropriation. If the self *were* the appropriation, agent and object would be identical, but if they were *different* objects, the erroneous consequence of their independence would follow. Just by refuting these two, the three alternatives—possessing, etc.—have all been refuted. Like object and agent, the two—self and appropriation—should be understood not as existing inherently, but rather as merely existing in mutual dependence.

Not only the process of the self and appropriation, but also the entities, without remainder, like the pot and cloth, should be understood to have been explained at the same time through the examination of fire and fuel. "The pot and cloth, etc." indicates cause and effect, part and whole, characteristic and characterized, and quality and qualified. Such things as the clay, water, wheel, and potter are the causes and the pot is the effect. Such things as the portions, or **[228]** such properties as the blueness, are parts, and the pot is the whole. Such things as the belly, the curved lip, the flared mouth, and the long neck are the characteristics, and the pot is the characterized. Such things as blueness are the qualities, and the pot is the qualified.

This is applicable in the same way to other things. The reasoning refuting such things as identity and difference, dependence and independence, going and coming, should be applied and should be applied similarly to all things.

1.3 Condemnation of their view of the point of the refutation

16. I do not think that
Those who teach that the self
And the entities can be identical or different
Understand the meaning of the doctrine.

Therefore, although we have established that just like the agent and object, neither the self and appropriation nor such things as pots exist inherently, but that all exist in mutual dependence, some arrogant people who think they nonerroneously understand the Buddha's teachings have misrepresented the system fabricated by the set of treatises of those who hold extreme views as the content of the scriptures of the Victor. Nāgārjuna does not think that those who misrepresent the meaning of the scriptures and who conceive of the appropriation, in virtue of which the self is posited, and the self as having either the same essences as or different essences from each other represent the Victor's thought. In the same way, he does not think that those who conceive of

such entities as the pot, and such things as clay—the grounds on which they are posited—as such things as pots as having either the same essences as, or different essences from each other represent the Victor's thought. Nāgarjuna does not think that these people are not skilled in presenting the profound meaning of the teaching of dependent origination free from the extremes of reification and nihilism—dependent designation, which is called reality.

By means of this verse he says that until one achieves a hermeneutical approach to the sūtras like that of the great master, one will not achieve an understanding of the Sage's doctrine as it really is taught. He thereby shows that the real meaning of all of the scriptures should be understood as they are established in this treatise.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

[229] The body of the yogi who has realized the way phenomena really exist through the examination of fire and fuel cannot be burned either by the fire at the end of the aeon or by the fire of the three poisons, as the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says:

> Just as space is never consumed
> Although it burns for many aeons,
> Those who have realized that phenomena are spacelike
> Are not consumed at all by fire.
>
> If one abides in samadhi and offers this prayer—
> May these burnings be pacified—
> Then even if the Buddha-fields are burned,
> Even if the Earth disintegrates, there will be no change. [*mDo sde* da 45b]

In the homage verses, it is shown that the dependently arisen is free from the eight extremes. Out of those, this chapter primarily refutes the two extremes of identity and difference, and in order to show that this is corroborated by profound sūtras and that all of the sūtras explaining these things should be understood through this chapter, a brief indication of confirmation by definitive sūtras is provided. In a sūtra it is said:

> Through the joint action of these three—the stick that is rubbed,
> The stick on which it is rubbed, and the effort of the hand—
> Through these conditions, fire arises.
> Having arisen, it performs it function and instantly ceases.
>
> Thereafter, some wise men investigate:
> Where did this come from? Where did it go?

Having searched in all directions,
Its going and coming are not found.

Similarly, the aggregates, the faculties, and the elements
Are internally and externally empty.
Everything is devoid of self and groundless.
The characteristic of entities is spacelike nature.

These kinds of characteristics of phenomena,
On seeing, Dīpaṅkara, you will realize. **[230]**
Just as you have realized them,
You shall cause gods and men to realize them,

O leader, may your cloud of compassion bestow a continuous
Peaceful rain of cool nectar to
Beings tormented by desire and hatred,
Which are false, thoroughly flawed and fabricated. [*Lalitavistara-sūtra, mDo sde* kha 89b]

Here, the first two verses provide an analogy that shows that when fire is examined nothing is found, and that having arisen from causes and conditions it performs its function. Then the next three lines show that both the self and that which is possessed by the self are empty of entity. The characteristics in the analogy apply to both. The next line provides an analogy for emptiness. The next two lines show that first Dīpaṅkara realizes, and then the next two show that he should teach it to others, and the next two lines present the reason that he should teach. The last two show how he should bestow the rain of Dharma.[11]

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

So, when the self and that which is possessed by the self, and such things as cause and effect and part and whole, are established as identical or different, using the example of fire and fuel, one might ask, "Are these established as existing inherently, or are they established through the power of nominal convention?" Then, if one analyzes using the previously explained arguments in the first case, realizing that there would be no grounds for designating anything as that which is to be burned and the burner, etc., grasping them as truly existent is refuted. But in the latter case, realising that all these conventions are completely tenable, it should be ascertained that they are dependently arisen.

This is the commentary on the tenth chapter, having sixteen verses, called "the examination of fire and fuel."

11. We have reversed the first two and last two lines of the final verse for better English grammar.

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CHAPTER XI

Examination of the Beginning and End

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of cyclic existence
    1.1.1 Refutation of cyclic existence having a beginning, middle, and end
    1.1.2 Refutation of birth and death being sequential or simultaneous
      1.1.2.1 Brief summary
      1.1.2.2 Detailed explanation
        1.1.2.2.1 Refutation of sequence
          1.1.2.2.1.1 Refutation of the priority of birth
          1.1.2.2.1.2 Refutation of the priority of aging and death
        1.1.2.2.2 Refutation of simultaneity
      1.1.2.3 Drawing conclusions
  1.2 Application of the argument to other phenomena
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the second part of the second major portion of the examination of the two selflessnesses—the explanation of the selflessness of the person. We have completed the first of its two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the person. We are now still in the second part: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of the person. We have completed the first part, the refutation of the example in the premises. **[231]** We now begin the second part, the refutation of the reasoning in the premises. This part has two sections: the refutation of the argument that the activity of birth and death exists and the refutation of the argument that, dependent on the self, suffering

exists. This chapter is the first of these two parts. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citation of definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here one might say the self exists essentially because cyclic existence exists. If there were no self, then in this cycle of five transmigrations, of migration proceeding to the next from this one, and coming from the previous one to this one, who would have the nature of transmigrating from one birth and death to another? The teacher has also said that the cycle of birth, aging, and death is without beginning or end. The origin of sentient beings who, clouded by ignorance, completely enmeshed with attachment, and bound by the chain of attachment, transmigrate, hurtling, is not apparent. Here the Buddha says that sentient beings, through continuous birth and death, transmigrate. Thus, the transmigrator exists, and that is the self.

The refutation of this has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of cyclic existence and the application of the argument to other phenomena.

1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of cyclic existence

This section has two parts: the refutation of cyclic existence having a beginning, middle, and end and the refutation of birth and death being sequential or simultaneous.

1.1.1 Refutation of cyclic existence having a beginning, middle, and end

> 1. When asked if the beginning is known,
> The great sage said "no."
> Cyclic existence is without origin or terminus.
> Because there is no beginning or end.

If cyclic existence existed inherently, then like such things as a pot, it would also have a beginning and an end. But it is said that cyclic existence does not have a beginning or end, in that the cycle of birth, aging, and death does not have an origin or a terminus.

Various non-Buddhist teachers, including Pūraṇa, held a discussion and decided to ask the Buddha whether he knew that this cyclic existence has a beginning or end. They said that if he says that he *does*, this would contradict

the many statements that there is no creator and that nothing arises without a cause, but if he says that he *does not*, **[232]** he would contradict his statement that he is omniscient. Then they asked him "Hey, Gautama! Do you know that this cyclic existence has a beginning?" The great sage replied, "There is no knowledge of a beginning." Thus, having said that cyclic existence has no beginning or end, he said clearly that it does not exist essentially. Therefore, since the origin and terminus are not seen, cyclic existence does not exist essentially; cyclic existence is like the circle made by swinging a glowing ember.

Someone might say, "The statement that cyclic existence has no origin demonstrates that there is no specific point from which it arises, nor any point after which it does not continue. How could it be tenable that to say that neither of these exists is to say explicitly that cyclic existence does not exist essentially?" But here we reply that the statement, "Cyclic existence has neither origin nor terminus," does not mean what you say it does, but instead means that he has also said that there is neither a beginning nor an end. This means that they do not exist ultimately. Buddhapālita also says in the same vein,

> In accordance with the presentation of the ultimate, the Buddha has said "there is neither beginning nor end." [211a]

Thus, this does not contradict *Prasannapadā's* earlier explanation [75b]. Suppose someone thought as follows: Responding "I don't know" to the question, "Do you know that there is a beginning?" is a conventional statement. How could this be a premise for the assertion that cyclic existence is essenceless?

Here, consider the similar argument in *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*:

> If through the elimination of afflictions
> monks depart from cyclic existence,
> Why have the buddhas not
> Explained the beginning? [14][1]

If there were an end of cyclic existence—and of aggregates that exist through their own characteristics—then there would be no reason for saying that there is no initial beginning. **[233]**

Suppose someone argued as follows: If the teacher had denied that there

1. The sDe dge edition of this text has the third and fourth line differently: *ci phyir rdzogs sangs rgyas rnams kyis/ de yi tshungs pa rnam mi bshad/* instead of *de rtsom rdzogs sangs rgyas rnams kyis/ gang ma bshad pa'i rgyu ci zhig/* [*dBu ma* tsa 21a]. The third and fourth lines as per this translation would read, "Why have the buddhas who have completed this not explained the beginning?" Tsong khapa's quotation and commentary follows the Narthang edition. [*mDo sde* ya 16a] Candrakīrti's *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* in sDe dge has the verse differently again: *nyon mongs zad pa'i dge slong gi/ 'khor ba gal te rnam bzlog na/ rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas rnam kyis kyang/ ci phyir de yi rtsom mi zhad/ [dBu ma ya* 13b]. Tsong khapa's reading agrees with, but does not follow closely in wording, Candrakīrti's, despite these minor differences in translation.

is a beginning and end of cyclic existence, then this would contradict the following statement in sūtra that there is elimination at the end:

> Therefore, oh monks, one should make strenuous effort to eliminate cyclic existence. Thinking that, you should begin training immediately. [*Saṁyuttanikāya XV Anamataggasaṁyuttam, IX Daṇḍasuttam, Vol. II,* 616]

There is no contradiction here, because this quotation from sūtra presents only the cyclic existence of those "sentient beings who are ignorant" as having no end, but for those who have completely eliminated the afflictions, there is an end.

Suppose one thought, would it not be contradictory for that which lacks an origin to have a terminus? There is no contradiction, because, as *Catuḥśataka* says,

> Just as the terminus of the seed is seen,
> But the origin is not seen,
> Without completing all of the causes,
> Nor does birth occur.[2] [VIII: 25]

Just as even though the seed does not have an origin, there is a terminus when it is burned by fire, although birth does not have a beginning for those who have not completed the causes through the exhaustion of the afflictions, it is said that there is a terminus—the exhaustion of that birth which occurs due the afflictions. Here, although the origin and terminus are equally nonexistent with respect to the way things really are, conventionally, the origin and terminus are not similar with respect to their existence and nonexistence.

Suppose someone says that although it has neither origin nor terminus essentially it must have a middle essentially, since that has not been refuted.

> 2. For that which has neither origin nor terminus,
> How could there be a middle?

How could that cyclic existence which does not have an origin or terminus essentially, have a middle essentially? It could not. Therefore, since cyclic existence is like the sky, without any origin, terminus, or middle existing inherently, these are merely nominal. Cyclic existence is just like such things as the circle made by swinging a glowing ember. Here, Buddhapālita [211b] quotes *Catuḥśataka* **[234]**

> Origin, middle and terminus
> Are not possible before arising.

2. Reading following the sDe dge, *skye ba'ng* instead of *skye ba'am* as in in Tsong khapa's text.

Without the other two,
How could any of them occur? [XV: 5]

This means that the three—origin, middle, and terminus—are these three: arising, enduring, and ceasing. Just as since arising and ceasing are not inherently existent, and enduring is not inherently existent, since the two—origin and terminus—do not exist, middle does not exist either. Therefore, it is not the case that since cyclic existence exists essentially, the transmigrator exists essentially.

1.1.2 Refutation of birth and death being sequential or simultaneous

This section has three parts: the brief summary, the detailed explanation, and drawing conclusions.

1.1.2.1 Brief summary

2cd. Therefore it is not tenable that it is ordered as
prior, posterior, or simultaneous.

Since cyclic existence does not have an origin, middle, or terminus inherently, it is not tenable for the transmigrator in cyclic existence inherently to have birth, aging, and death, either ordered as sequential or as simultaneous. According to other Buddhist schools who maintain that the person exists inherently, the sūtras that say that sentient beings transmigrate—being born and dying continuously, from beginningless time to endless time—thereby imply that these sentient beings, who are agents of birth and death, exist. It has already been demonstrated to them that it is not tenable that the cycle of birth and death exists essentially simply on the ground of the statement that there is no origin or terminus. Here, if birth and death existed essentially, one cannot escape their being categorized as existing in one of the three temporal periods, and these alternatives are now refuted.

Generally, all produced phenomena arise and age. As it was said previously,

Inasmuch as the nature of all entities
Is always aging and death . . . [VII: 24ab]

Although sometimes ceasing is called "death," it has been said in the context of applying this argument to other phenomena that it applies to the temporal order of causes and effects of things other than sentient beings. In this context, though, sentient beings are the issue. The words "death" and "dying"

must be understood in context. **[235]** The basis of the analysis of sequence and simultaneity is not *Lhejin's* first being born, then aging, and finally dying; but these three *in general* are taken as the basis.

1.1.2.2 Detailed explanation

This section has two parts: the refutation of sequence and the refutation of simultaneity.

1.1.2.2.1 Refutation of sequence

This section has two parts: the refutation of the priority of birth and the refutation of the priority of aging and death.

1.1.2.2.1.1 Refutation of the priority of birth

> 3. If birth came first,
> And then aging and death,
> Then birth would be ageless and deathless
> And a deathless one would be born.

If the transmigrator's birth came first and later his aging and death, in that case, his birth would be ageless and deathless. If you maintained that, it would follow that the birth would be unproduced, because it would lack transformation into aging and death. If sentient beings who are born lacked death, they would have to be permanent. It would follow that *they* are unproduced. The *Buddhapālita* says that if birth were ageless and deathless, later there would be no basis for aging and death. Even though later aging and death are encountered, there would be no effect on birth, because it would endure inherently without aging and death. [211b]

If one thought that birth was first, then Lhejin, without ever having died in a previous life, would be born for the first time here. The erroneous consequence would follow that his cyclic existence has a beginning and that it would be causeless. Moreover, it would be not be tenable that one remembers one's previous lives, saying "I was there in the past." There would also be new sentient beings who did not exist in the past.

Suppose one meant, by "Lhejin was born here without having died in a previous life," that *the Lhejin who was born here* did not die in a previous life. Consider this, for instance: Although a person who, having left a previous life as a god, is born in this life as a human being, he would have been born in

this life without having died in the previous life. However, the life of the Lhejin who is born here, like cyclic existence, must be without beginning.

If one maintained that *the very person* who is born in this life as a human being **[236]** died in a previous life, this still would make no sense at all, because *he* does not exist in the previous life; and it would follow that the death in the previous life would not be the death of a god. If the very one born in this life died in the previous life, the very one who dies in this life would be born in the next life. So, the very transmigrator who dies would have to be born as *that* transmigrator.

Suppose someone argued as follows: If the one sentient being called "Lhejin," without having died in a previous life, is born here as one sentient being, there would be a beginning. However, saying this would not make sense, because this occurs in the context of the refutation of birth being the earlier of the two—birth and death—of a single Lhejin; but this is not the context of an analysis of which of the two—birth and death—is earlier for *distinct* sentient beings, as opposed to a *single* sentient being.

Here, the analysis is not of which of the two—birth and death—is earlier with respect to *two* sentient beings belonging to *different* continua, but rather with respect to a *single* continuum of a sentient being. Here also, the opponent maintains that the Lhejin of this life's birth (the entry of consciousness into the embryo[3]) and his death (the sloughing off of the homogeneous continuum of aggregates) come first and later, respectively. But he maintains that there is no certainty with respect to a single continuum that birth comes first and death comes later. According to the position that both the Lhejin of this life and his self exist inherently, it is not maintained that they exist distinctly; but instead that they are a single entity. In that case, since they are one, the birth and death of the Lhejin of this life and the birth, aging, and death of the same continuum cannot be distinguished as earlier and later. Therefore, if birth in a single continuum were prior to death, then there would have to have been no death in that continuum before Lhejin was born in this life. Then the following errors would ensue: asserting that there is a beginning of Lhejin's cyclic existence, asserting that there would be a new emergence of the continuum of a sentient being where none had been there before, and it would not be tenable for Lhejin to say that "I was there in those lives." **[237]** Thus, this is neither to say that the very sentient being that is born in this life is born without having died previously, nor that the one who died in the previous life and has been born in this one is a continuum of different sentient beings. Therefore, we do not commit any error.

One might argue as follows: Although the Lhejin of this life could remem-

3. For Tsong khapa, as for most Buddhist philosophers, "birth" refers to the entry of the continuum of consciousness into the embryo, not the emergence of the child from the mother's body.

ber, "I was born in that and other previous lives," it would be wrong to accept it just as he remembers it. If we did so accept it, the very Lhejin of this life would have to have been in the previous lives as well, and therefore he would be permanent.

In response to this, we say this is an argument propounded by someone who does not understand how memory works. For instance, early in the course of a debate, someone accepts that something such as sound is permanent. Later, not remembering what he accepted earlier, he maintains that it is impermanent. When the opponent in the debate demonstrates the contradiction by juxtaposing the two theses, he remembers, thinking "earlier, *I* maintained that sound was permanent," but does not remember "*The I who exists later* maintained earlier that sound was permanent." For this reason, contradictory theses can be juxtaposed; otherwise, it would be impossible to juxtapose contradictory theses, because the very one who maintained that sound was permanent previously does not maintain that it is impermanent later.

Similarly, when the man—Lhejin in this life—remembers his previous lives ("I was born in that life and others") he does not remember, "I, qua *being currently existing in this lif*e was born in that life and others." So, the self objectified by the Lhejin of this life, which is the referent of the "I" in any thought "I am," does exist in previous lives as well. Therefore there is no inconsistency in remembering. This is not similar to saying that since he—Lhejin of this life—existed earlier, he would be permanent.

Similarly, with respect to future lives, the very person who exists currently in this life will not go into future lives. However, the mere self—the object of the thought "I am"—is taken to go there as well. **[238]** Therefore it is reasonable to perform virtuous deeds in order to achieve benefits in future lives and to abandon vicious deeds out of fear of suffering in future lives. For instance, although the person who exists today will not exist tomorrow, out of fear of suffering hunger tomorrow, he stores food today. To take another example, out of fear of the sufferings of old age, a person accumulates wealth in his youth.

In all of these cases in general—without specifying the identity of the self in terms of time and place—the self, because it desires to obtain happiness and to avoid suffering, does such things. The mere self is taken to persist through those times as well. Thus it is not erroneous for these people to take the mere self as the referent of "I." Therefore, the person who uses the expression "I am," and the basis of the use of that expression should not be taken to be coextensive; instead, the person should be understood as a segment of that self. Since all of these are important in order to understand dependent arising in general, and in order to ascertain the relation between virtuous and vicious deeds and happiness and suffering in particular, they have been discussed briefly here.

Here the *Commentary* presents the following example: One might say,

just as such things as a mango tree are seen first being born without being preceded by aging and death, the self also is born without being preceded by aging and death. But, since *even they* arise from the cessation of their seeds, they do not arise without the other thing having ceased. So, this is similar to the preceding. One might then think that since the tree that comes from the seed is different from it, the arising of the tree, occurs without previous cessation. But since cause and effect are not different, this is similar to what we are proving. This is because a single continuum, as we saw earlier, is like a self; otherwise it would be difficult to respond [76b].

1.1.2.2.1.2 Refutation of the priority of aging and death

> 4. If birth were to come after,
> And aging and death first,
> How could there be a causeless aging and death
> Without birth?

If the birth of a sentient being came later, and its aging and death came first, then without birth having come first, without a cause, **[239]** how could its aging and death occur? They could not, because it is said that "conditioned by birth there is aging and death." As it is said,

> When a clod is lifted,
> There is a cause of its lifting.
> Apart from the cause of lifting,
> There is no other cause of its falling. [*Prasannapadā* 76b]

As this says, the lifting itself is the cause of the falling, and there is no other cause; similarly arising itself is the cause of cessation, and there is no other. Thus, there is no causeless cessation. Since cessation has arising as a cause, and since coming into existence is the cause of cessation,

> Thus these produced phenomena
> Come into existence through having causes.
> Being that which arises and ceases
> Is the essence of a phenomenon. [*Prasannapadā* 77a][4]

This is a felicitous quotation. It is a scriptural source establishing that disintegration at the second moment is the effect of arising at the previous moment.

4. It is not clear what the source of this quotation in *Prasannapadā* is.

1.1.2.2.2 Refutation of simultaneity

5. For birth, aging, and death
   To be simultaneous makes no sense.
   That which is being born would be dying,
   And both would be without a cause.

It also makes no sense for birth, aging, and death to exist inherently simultaneously, because if that were possible, then when something is being born it would be dying—that is, ceasing. This makes no sense, because they are mutually exclusive, like light and dark, and the dying of that which is being born is not seen in the ordinary world. In general, the activities of arising and ceasing are not mutually exclusive, nor are the two—arising and ceasing—inconsistent. It is well known to all that it is contradictory for that which is arising and that which is ceasing to be present at the same time in the same basis.

So, if arising and ceasing each existed through their own characteristic, then, as has been previously explained, at the time of the arising, that which is to be arisen would have to exist. In that case, since that which is now existent would also be ceasing, at that time there would be both that which is arising—that is, that which is progressing—and that which is ceasing (that is, that which is being exhausted), which are mutually exclusive. Birth and death would both be causeless as well, because it is not tenable for one of two simultaneous things to be the cause of the other **[240]** and because neither would death precede birth nor would birth precede death.

1.1.2.3 Drawing conclusions

Suppose someone thought as follows: Whether or not the framework of sequence and simultaneity apply to such things as birth, birth, aging, and death exist. It would not be possible for them to be without a basis; so there must be a basis, and that must be the self.

6. Since the framework of sequence and simultaneity
   Does not make sense for
   Birth, aging, and death,
   Why do you fabricate them?

With the previous arguments in hand, consider the following analysis: Since it is impossible to apply the framework of sequence and simultaneity to birth, aging, and death, why are you fabricating—that is, asserting—that this is birth and those are aging and death? One could also read it this way: So, if

they do not objectify them, why do the aryas fabricate them? They do not! Because they see thing just as they are.

If birth, aging, and death existed inherently, they would have to be either sequential or simultaneous. But since the framework of sequence and simultaneity is not tenable here, birth, aging, and death do not exist inherently. Since they do not exist, give up your assertion that because birth, aging, and death exist inherently, the self that is the agent of birth and death exists inherently.

1.2 Application of the argument to other phenomena

7. Not only is cyclic existence
Without a prior limit—[5]
Neither cause and effect;
Nor characteristic and characterized.

8. Nor feeling and the feeler;
Whatever there is—
All entities
Are without a prior limit.

Not only does the birth, aging, and death of cyclic existence (sentient beings) have no beginning—that is, what is prior—nor anything posterior or simultaneous, but cause and effect, characteristic and characterized, and feeler and feeling as well have no beginning. These indicate how one should understand that the framework of posteriority and simultaneity does not apply to them, either. And so, if the cause inherently existed prior to it, then the effect would also be present at that time. But since it is not, it would follow from that assumption that they are causeless. And if the effect were prior, it would also be causeless. If the cause and effect were simultaneous, they would *both* be causeless, as was previously explained.

If the characteristic were prior, **[241]** there would be nothing to be characterized; if the characterized were prior, it would be without characteristics. If the characteristic and characterized existed inherently simultaneously, they would exist without mutual dependence. If the feeler were prior, then of what would it be the feeler? If the feeling existed first, it would make no sense to call it a feeling without a feeler. If the two existed at the same time, then they would fail to be mutually dependent, and both would be without a cause.

Through this explanation of cyclic existence one should understand that not only such things as cause and effect are without these three—beginning and the others—but so are all other entities ("whatever there is") including

5. 7ab are found at 8ab in the Sanskrit edition; 7cd become 7ab; 8ab becomes 7cd.

such things as cognition and cognized, knower and known, conclusion and premise, and part and whole.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to demonstrate that the fact that birth and aging and cause and effect do not exist inherently can also be established by profound scriptures, and to demonstrate that all of the scriptures that show that all phenomena are beginningless and endless, that they are deathless and birthless, and that cyclic existence should not be objectified are explained by this chapter.

The *Ratnamegha-sūtra* says,

> When you turned the wheel of Dharma
> You, the protector, taught that
> All phenomena are primordially peaceful and unarisen
> And are essentially free. [*mDo sde* Wa 9a]

And similarly the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says,

> Primordially empty, not coming,
> Not gone, not enduring and without abode,
> Having an illusory nature, and always without a core,
> All things are as pure as the sky. [*mDo sde* Da 146b]
>
> . . .
> The dharma that the Victor has taught
> Is not perceived by those who have not exhausted the obscurations.
> The dharma that things are primordially selfless and that there are no sentient beings,
> Although it is completely taught, is never exhausted. [*mDo sde* Da 147a] **[242]**
>
> . . .
> Shown by imputation that it is merely imputed,
> The terminus of cyclic existence is not found.
> That which is a prior limit is without characteristic.
> Therefore in order to understand in the future
>
> One engages in such activities and with such objects,
> And becomes either of high or low status.
> All phenomenally are eternally and essentially empty.[6]

6. Reading with sDe dge *dban zhing* for *blun zhin*.

> It should be known that all phenomena are selfless. [*mDo sde* Da 147b]

Here "primordially" means *originally*. "Peaceful" denotes the object of peaceful wisdom. It is not arisen because it is essentially free, that is, it is inherently empty. The next four lines present the three temporal periods as primordially empty, as illusory and as sky-like. The next five lines present phenomena as primordially empty of the self of the person, and show that the dharma taught by the Victor, as well, is merely imputed. The next five lines present all phenomena as beginningless and endless, and say that in order to realize those in the future, one must engage in action in the present. In the future, one will thus achieve higher or lower fruits according one's abilities. The last two lines say that one should know that the meaning of "selflessness" is emptiness of the self, which is the nature of the knower.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

If the transmigrating person and the activity of transmigration—birth, aging, and death—and all things such as cause and effect, existed inherently, there would be no way to call them "birth," etc. Therefore, it should be ascertained that the statement that the transmigrator is born and dies continuously is only tenable when taken as merely posited through convention.

This is the commentary on the eleventh chapter, having eight verses called "the examination of the beginning and end."

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CHAPTER XII

Examination of Suffering

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of the inherent existence of suffering
    1.1.1 Assertion of the thesis
    1.1.2 Presentation of the argument
      1.1.2.1 Refutation of the creation of suffering by each of self and other
        1.1.2.1.1 Refutation of creation by each of self and other with respect to suffering
          1.1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of self-creation with respect to suffering
          1.1.2.1.1.2 Refutation of creation by another with respect to suffering
        1.1.2.1.2 Refutation of creation by each of self and other with respect to the person
          1.1.2.1.2.1 Refutation of creation by the person himself
          1.1.2.1.2.2 Refutation of creation by someone other than the person himself
        1.1.2.1.3 Presentation of other arguments showing that it is not created by each of self and others
      1.1.2.2 Refutation of the creation of suffering by both self and other together and of the assertion that it is without a cause
  1.2 Application of this argument to other phenomena
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the second part of the examination of the two selflessnesses—the explanation of the selflessness of the person. We have completed the first of its two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the person. We are now still in the second part: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of the person. We have completed the first part, the refutation of the example, in the premises. We are still in the second part, the refutation of the reasoning in the premises. We have completed the first part—the refutation of the argument that the activity of birth and death exists. **[243:1]** This chapter is the second of these two parts: the refutation of the argument that that dependent on the self—suffering—exists. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here one might say, "The self exists essentially because the suffering with which it is associated exists. According to sūtra, the appropriator's five aggregates are suffering. Therefore, they exist. Suffering cannot exist without a basis; therefore it must have a basis, and that is the self."

The refutation of this has two parts: the refutation of the inherent existence of suffering and the application of this argument to other phenomena.

1.1 Refutation of the inherent existence of suffering

This section has two parts: the assertion of the thesis and the presentation of the argument.

1.1.1 Assertion of the thesis

> 1. Some maintain that suffering is self-created.
> Some maintain that it is created by another; others that it is created by both,
> Or that it arises without a cause.
> Such creation is impossible.

Some of our opponents say that suffering is created by itself, some say that something other than it created suffering, some others say that both it and something else created the suffering, whereas some say that suffering occurs without a cause. However, we assert the following thesis: It cannot be the case that the suffering that is to arise essentially is created in any sense.

The Sāṁkhya maintain that suffering arises from that which has the essence of suffering. The Vaiśeṣikas and others maintain that suffering is created by the personal self. Others, including other Buddhist schools, maintain that suffering and that which gives rise to it are different through their own characteristics. Creation by both is maintained by the naked Jains: They say that since it is created by the body, the suffering of the body is self-created; and since it is created by life, which is different, suffering is created by another. The Cārvākas say that it is causeless.

1.1.2 Presentation of the argument

This part has two sections: the refutation of the creation of suffering by each of self and other; **[244]** and the refutation of the creation of suffering by both self and other together and of the assertion that it is without a cause.

1.1.2.1 Refutation of the creation of suffering by each of self and other

This section has three parts: the refutation of creation by each of self and other with respect to suffering, refutation of the creation by each of self and other with respect to the person, and the presentation of other arguments showing that it is not created by each of self and others.

1.1.2.1.1 Refutation of creation by each of self and other with respect to suffering

This section has two parts: the refutation of self-creation with respect to suffering and the refutation of the creation by another with respect to suffering.

1.1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of self-creation with respect to suffering

> 2. If suffering was created by itself,
> Then it would not arise dependently.
> For those aggregates
> Arise in dependence on these aggregates.

If suffering created itself, then suffering would create itself inherently. Therefore it would not depend on causes and conditions because when it already exists, there is no need for it to give rise to itself. And if it does not exist,

it *cannot* give rise to itself. It *is* dependently arisen because the aggregates associated at the time of birth arise depending on the aggregates at the time of death. Thus, suffering created by itself makes no sense.

1.1.2.1.1.2 Refutation of the creation by another with respect to suffering

> 3. If those were different from these,
> Or if these were different from those,
> Suffering could be created by another.
> These would be created by those others.

If these aggregates at the time of death were inherently different from those aggregates associated with birth, and if the aggregates that are associated with birth were inherently different from the aggregates at the time of death, then in that case the present aggregates, which are different, would create the future aggregates. Therefore, the suffering would be created by another; this is not tenable, because if they were inherently different, there would be no causal relation between them as will be explained later in "Whatever comes into being dependent on another . . . " [XVIII: 10].

The two last lines are translated more felicitously in the *Buddhapālita* [214b] and in *Prajñāpradīpa* [44b] as

> Since it is created by something other than itself,
> Suffering is created by another.[1]

1.1.2.1.2 Refutation of creation by each of self and other with respect to the person

This section has two parts: the refutation of creation by the person himself **[245]** and refutation of creation by someone other than the person himself.

1.1.2.1.2.1 Refutation of creation by the person himself

Suppose one argued as follows: The suffering created by suffering itself is not said to be suffering created by self, but instead the person himself creates his

1. These are in the Tibetan translations of the *Buddhapālita* and *Prajñāpradīpa gzhan de dag gis 'dei byas pas/sdug bsngal gzhan gyis byas par 'gyur//* as opposed to *sdug bsngal gzhan gyis byas 'gyur zhing/gzhan de dag gis de byas 'gyur//*.

own suffering. Having been created by another person it would not come to fruition in this person, and so suffering is said to be created by oneself.

> 4. If suffering were caused by a person himself,
> Then who is that self who created the suffering—
> That person—
> Apart from suffering?

If the human self[2] of this man creates the suffering on the basis of which the human self is imputed, then who could that person be who has created that suffering apart from the suffering created? For it would be necessary to be able to distinguish between them by saying "this is the suffering" and "this is the agent of the suffering." However, this is not possible.

Suppose one thought that the person who is the appropriator of a man's suffering created the suffering of a god. Though that person would not create his own suffering, that would be the creation of the suffering of another. Suppose he argues that although the aggregates to be appropriated by the two persons are different, the persons are not different. This would not make any sense either, because the person cannot be demonstrated to be a different object from that which is to be appropriated.

1.1.2.1.2.2 Refutation of creation by someone other than the person himself

Suppose one argued as follows: The human person does not create the man's suffering, but creates a god's suffering in order to be born as a god and it comes to fruition in the divine person. In virtue of that suffering, he is designated as the divine person.

> 5. If suffering arose from another person,
> Then that other one would create the suffering.
> What could that which comes to fruition be
> Apart from the suffering?

Suppose the suffering of the god arose from the human person who is other than the god. Then, though the self of the human person, who is other, creates this suffering, the fruition of the suffering occurs in the divine person. How could there be something else, apart from the suffering, that is to come to fruition? There could not be!

2. Tsong khapa reads the Tibetan translation of *Prasannapadā's* commentary on this verse *gang zag bdag nyid*, which would follow the Sanskrit *svayam pudgalena, the person himself*, but writes *mi'i gang zag dag*, forcing the reading *the human self of the man*, clearly departing from the sense of *Prasannapadā*.

6. If another person gave rise to suffering,
Who would that other person be
Who created it and gave that suffering,
Other than suffering?

If the human person who is other gave rise to the suffering of the god **[246]**, then that which created the suffering of the god—that person who is other than the god, who gave the suffering to the god, who is the appropriator of the suffering, in virtue of which he is called a human—a person—is nothing other than the appropriator of its own suffering. If that to whom it is given and that by whom it is given existed inherently, it would have be found that someone was inherently different from his own appropriated suffering, but this is not found. The verse that refutes the personal self of the giver is not commented on in the *Buddhapālita* or *Prajñāpradīpa*, but *Prasannapadā* comments on both [79a].

7. When it does not exist as self-created,
How could suffering be created by another?
Any suffering created by another
Must have been self-created.

Moreover, if the suffering created by a person himself existed inherently, then the suffering created by others should also exist inherently. Hence, since, as has been already explained, self-created suffering does not exist inherently, how could that suffering be created by another? It could not be. The reason is that the creation of suffering by another is creation by that *other* man *himself*. If this man himself did not create the suffering, then how could you say that that god's suffering was created by another? Buddhapālita explains it this way [215b] and *Prasannapadā* explains it similarly [79ab].

1.1.2.1.3 Presentation of other arguments showing that it is not created by each of self and others

8. No suffering is self-created.
Nothing creates itself.
If another is not self-created,
How could suffering be created by another?

There is no suffering that is self-created, because that suffering does not create itself. This is because that would entail the inconsistency of reflexive action. Suppose one asserted that this suffering is created by an inherently existent other. How could this be? It cannot, because when you say "This creates," since that supposed other "is not self-created"—it does not exist inherently—it must depend on another cause.

Buddhapālita says that suffering is created by the person himself, **[247]** and thinking that the person is not other than suffering, it is said that suffering is created by suffering. It is also said that that this suffering is created by another, thinking that *this person* creates suffering and *it* is not suffering [216a]. On this reading, the first line refutes the creation of suffering by the person himself on the grounds that apart from the appropriation there is no independent person. The second line, on this reading, refutes the creation of suffering by itself; the next two lines refute the creation of suffering by another on the grounds that there is no self apart from suffering.

1.1.2.2 Refutation of the creation of suffering by both self and other together and of the assertion that it is without a cause

Suppose one thought that although this suffering is not created by one of these individually it is created by both of them together.

> 9. If suffering were created by each,
> Suffering could be created by both.
> Not created by self or by other,
> How could uncaused suffering occur?

Although the chariot cannot be posited only on the basis of such things as each *individual* wheel, the chariot *can* be posited depending on a *complete* assembly of the parts. If the case were like this, that thought would make sense. Instead it is like this: If each of them were innocent of the killing, then it cannot be said they both are guilty of the killing. If the suffering were created by each of self and other individually, then the suffering would be created by both of them together. But it is not caused by each, because this has already been refuted before.

As it has been explained, suffering is neither created by itself nor by another, and how could it arise causelessly? It cannot, just like the beautiful fragrance of the sky flower. Thus suffering does not exist inherently; nor does its basis, the self, exist inherently.

1.2 Application of the argument to other phenomena

> 10. Not only does suffering not exist
> In any of the fourfold ways:
> No external entity exists
> In any of the fourfold ways.

It should be understood, as explained earlier, that not only does the suffering of the inner world—that of sentient beings—fail to exist in any of the fourfold ways, such as being self-created, but external phenomena such as the seed, the sprout, the pot, and the cloth, fail to exist in any of the fourfold ways, such as being self-created. **[248]** Although these inner and outer entities fail to exist in any of the fourfold ways, such as being self-created, they still must exist. In what way do they exist? If this is considered in terms of an examination into whether or not they exist inherently, then, if such things as suffering existed essentially, they would have to exist in one of the fourfold ways. But, as was explained earlier, that is not the case. Therefore, it is ascertained that such things as suffering do not exist essentially, because the relevant superordinate category is incoherent.[3]

On the other hand, suppose one searches the framework of dependent arising for the self that is found merely by adhering to an erroneous position, and for such things as conventional suffering. If one does so, abandoning the four extremes such as self-creation, one should, as the eighth chapter has explained, accept that they exist in virtue of being merely conditioned, dependently arisen phenomena. As it is said,

> Sophists maintain that suffering is
> Self-created, created by others,
> Created by both and without a cause.
> But you taught them to be dependently arisen. [*Lokātītastava* 21]

Buddhapālita raises the question, "If there is no suffering, what would the teacher mean by saying, 'Oh Kāśyapa, there is suffering. I have seen it and understood it'?" [*Saṁyuttanikāya, Nidāna Vagga, Acelakassapasutta*, Vol. II, 414] He continues, "who would say, 'There is no suffering'? He replies, "Have we not said, 'It would not arise dependently'? [XII: 2b] Therefore we say that suffering is dependently arisen. But we do not say that it is self-created, etc." [216b–217a]

Both commentaries therefore say that this is a direct refutation of self-creation on grounds of dependent origination, and that this also refutes creation by another. Therefore, creation by both **[249]** is also thereby refuted. It is clear that arising causelessly is also refuted by this argument. Thus the necessity of accepting, without any doubt, the framework of dependent arising and cause and effect shows, through refuting inherent existence, that everything, such as action and agent, only makes sense from the standpoint of essencelessness. It is extremely important to understand this demonstration in all contexts from the beginning to the end of the text.

If one held that the framework of dependent arising and cause and effect

3. The relevant superordinate category is that of essential existence.

is refuted by rational analysis regarding whether or not things exist in reality, then one would not accept cause and effect in one's own system. It is said that such a person should not be taught subtle selflessness right away but should be led to it by teaching coarse selflessness first.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to demonstrate that the refutation of the theses that phenomena are self-created, created by other, created by both, or are causeless is also established by profound scriptures, and to demonstrate that all of the scriptures which show this are explained by this chapter.

The *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says:

> The Victor explains phenomena to be conventional.
> The produced and unproduced are equally dependent.
> In reality there is neither self nor person.
> All transmigrators are similarly characterized.
>
> Virtuous and wicked actions cannot be destroyed,
> Because whatever is done by the self is experienced by the self.
> The consequences of action cannot be transferred,
> And experience cannot be causeless.
>
> All of cyclic existence is eternally empty like illusion,[4] powerless,
> Like a straw, like a scarecrow, like a bubble,
> Like an illusion.
> Although they are referred to by words, they are void. [*mDo sde* Da 147b]

and

> All produced phenomena should be understood as
> Just as an echo that arises dependent on conditions such as
> A cave, a mountain, a cliff, a canyon.
> All transmigrators are like illusions and mirages. [*mDo sde* Da 147b]

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

The summary has already been presented. This is the commentary on the twelfth chapter, having ten verses, called the "examination of that which is created by self and that which is created by another."

4. The term here translated as *sgyu ma* (illusion) is the Sanskrit *alīka,* which would be more naturally translated in English as *fantasy.*

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CHAPTER XIII

Examination of Compounded Phenomena

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Explanation of essencelessness through sūtras renowned by others
  1.2 Rebutting the refutations claiming that these explanations are not tenable
  1.3 Refutation of the claim that these sūtras have different meanings
    1.3.1 Presentation of other ways of interpreting these sūtras
    1.3.2 Refutation of the argument for those interpretations
      1.3.2.1 Refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of that which is arisen from others
        1.3.2.1.1 Refutation by showing that essence and transformation into another are inconsistent
        1.3.2.1.2 Refutation by showing that it is impossible for transformation into another to exist inherently
      1.3.2.2 Refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of emptiness
        1.3.2.2.1 The main point
        1.3.2.2.2 Refutation of the claim that this contradicts sūtras
          1.3.2.2.2.1 Explanation of the meaning of the treatises
          1.3.2.2.2.2 Presentation of the source treatises
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We have now completed the first part of the section on the distinct presentation of the selflessness of the person and the selflessness of phenomena—that discussing the selflessness of the person. **[250: 4]** We now begin the second

part of that section, the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of things and the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of things. This chapter is the first of those two parts. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

This section has three parts: the explanation of essencelessness through treatises renowned to others, rebutting the refutations claiming that these explanations are not tenable, and refutation of the claim that these treatises have different meanings.

1.1 Explanation of essencelessness through sūtras renowned by others

> 1. The Transcendent Lord has said that whatever
> Is deceptive is false.
> All compounded phenomena are deceptive.
> Therefore they are all false.

According to the mode of analysis just explained, things do not arise from any of the four, such as from self, etc., nor could that which exists essentially arise in any other way. Since things appear to have arisen inherently to those whose wisdom-eye is clouded by the mists of ignorance, fools are deceived just as an illusory horse or elephant conjured by a magician deceives those who do not understand the magic. Therefore, the Buddha, the Transcendent Lord, saying that any deceptive phenomenon is false, says that the deceptive is categorized as false. Since he also said that all compounded phenomena are deceptive pheomena, all of these compounded phenomena are false. As the sūtra says,

> O monks: As all compounded phenomena whatever are deceptive phenomena, they are false. The nondeceptive phenomenon, which is nirvana, is ultimate truth.

Similarly it is also said,

> These compounded phenomena are deceptive phenomena and are completely disintegrating phenomena. [*Majjhimanikāya Dhātuvibhaṅgasuttam Vol.* 5, 23, p. 1355][1] **[251]**

1. This quotation is repeated in several Mahāyāna sūtras: *Dharmasaṁgīti-sūtra [mDo sde* sha 6b], *Śrīmālādevisiṁhanāda-sūtra [dKon brtsegs* cha 272b], and *Vimaladatta-paripṛcchā-sūtra, [dKon brtsegs* ca 246b].

Deceptive phenomena mislead one. They appear as other than as they are, like the circle made by swinging a glowing ember. The ultimate truth is that which is nondeceptive, just like nirvana. It is established by arguments and by statements in sūtra that, although things do not exist inherently, they appear to do so, and thus are deceptive. And through these statements it is established that entities are essenceless. The *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* says: "All phenomena are empty; that is in virtue of lacking essence." [*Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, Sher phyin sna tshogs* kha 136a] Here the statements in sūtra that nirvana is truth mean that since compounded phenomena are presented as not being true, in virtue of the fact that they are said to be deceptive phenomena, the nondeceptive is called "ultimate truth." But it is not established as true in virtue of existing inherently.

1.2 Rebutting the refutations claiming that these explanations are not tenable

Some contend that if, in virtue of being deceptive, all compounded phenomena are presented as false, then nothing could perform any function, and thus that this view is false and deprecates all phenomena. The previously quoted sūtra is accepted by the Śrāvaka schools[2] and they advance this argument because these two reificationist schools do not interpret this sūtra as explained above. Here is their idea: Whatever is false is taken to be like the horns on the head of a rabbit. Thus it would follow that there would be no causes or effects. They say this because they do not understand that to be false in this sense is to *not* exist inherently, but to *appear to do so*. The appearing objects, however, *can* perform functions, just as an illusion can.

Nonetheless, you are justified to say that the deceptive compound phenomena that deceive you exist inherently, because if a person like you were not deceived by them, it would be incorrect to regard them as that which deceives fools. **[252]**

2. If whatever is a deceptive phenomenon
Is false, then what deceives?
Saying that, the Transcendent Lord
Perfectly presents emptiness.

When it is stated that whatever is deceptive is false, "What deceives?" means *What is being deprecated by being taken as a nonexistent entity?* If any object existed inherently then when objects are presented as false, this would

2. That is, the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas; the two other schools, the Cittamātra and Madhyamaka, are the Mahāyāna schools.

be to deprecate them, and so would be nihilism. But since entities do not have even the slightest essential existence, "What deceives?" means that we are not saying that anything that *in fact* exists does *not* exist, and so your argument does not make any sense.

Suppose one argued as follows: You maintain that this sūtra demonstrates the falsity of objects, refuting their truth by saying, "In that case, if this sūtra does not demonstrate that things are unable to perform functions, what does it demonstrate?"

Through that statement the Transcendent Lord said that compounded things are false. By saying that, he did *not* demonstrate that entities do not *exist*, but rather perfectly demonstrated their *emptiness*—that they are essentially non-arisen. As it is said in the *Anavatapta-sūtra,*

> Whatever arises from conditions is non-arisen;
> It does not have the essence of being arisen.
> That which depends on conditions is explained to be empty.
> Whoever understands emptiness is mindful. [*mDo sde* pha 230b][3]

Just as it says that to depend on conditions is what it means to be essentially unarisen, the statement that compounded phenomena are false also demonstrates that they are essentially unarisen; but it does not, by refuting their arising, demonstrate that they are nonentities. Thus, the meaning of this sūtra is explained as follows: It says that although things are essentially unarisen, they appear to be essentially arisen, and so they are deceptive and false.

1.3 Refutation of the claim that these sūtras have different meanings

This section has two parts: presentation of other ways of interpreting these sūtras and the refutation of the argument for those interpretations.

1.3.1 Presentation of other ways of interpreting these sūtras

The śrāvaka schools, relying on the sūtra quoted earlier which says that compounded phenomena are disintegating phenomena, maintain that "all things are false and deceptive" means that, although nothing remains for a second moment after the moment when it comes into existence, nonetheless things

3. The sDe dge and Narthang [*mDo sde* na 335b] both have this as *rkyen las skyes pa gang yin de ma skyed/ de la skye ba ngo bo nyid kyis med/ rkyen la rag las gang yin stong par gsuns/stong nyid gang shes de ni bag yod pa'o//* vs *de la skye ba'i rang bzhin yod ma yin/rkyen la rag las gang de stong par bshad/gang zhig stong nyid shes de bag yod yin//*. But there is no significant difference in meaning.

appear to remain. **[253]** Having interpreted it this way, they say that essential non-arising is not the meaning of the sūtra, but instead that *nonendurance of its essence* is the meaning of "essencelessness," "falsity," and "unreality."

> 3. All entities are natureless,
> Since transformation into something else is perceived.
> All entities lack naturelessness
> Because all entities have emptiness.

Here is the first of their two arguments: If entities do not have their own inherently existent nature, they would not be seen to transform into something else. But this is seen. It can not be that the meaning of the sūtra is that they do not inherently exist, but instead that since they transform into something else their essence does not endure.

Their second argument is that it is not the case that entities do not have their own inherently existent nature, because it must be maintained that all property bearers have emptiness as a property. It is not tenable that the non-existent barren woman's son has the property of blueness. Without property bearers it is not tenable that there are the properties that depend upon them. Therefore, all entities exist essentially.

> 4. If they are natureless,
> What transforms?

Continuing in this vein they ask, "If entities do not have their own inherently existent nature, then what is the nature of the thing that transforms into something else?" These opponents are skillful in dialectic, and therefore when they interpret the meaning of "essencelessness" in the sūtras they accept, they say that it means impermanence in virtue of the fact that things' essences do not endure. However, it absolutely does not mean that "having versus lacking essential existence," or "truly existing versus not truly existing," means *existing permanently* versus *not existing permanently*, as they say. Therefore, this is completely different from some similar assertions by some sophists from the Land of Snows who are just talking nonsense.[4]

The set of treatises of the Yogācārins setting out the true existence of things emerged after the time of the master who wrote this root text. Therefore, here when Buddhist schools are taken as opponents, those two reificationist schools[5] are taken as the opponents. When their views are shown to be inconsistent with scriptures, this is shown with reference to Hīnayāna scriptures. However when their assertions are refuted, the assertions by the Yogācārins that things

4. Tsong khapa is probably refering to Dolbuwa Sherab Gyaltsen, Lotsawa Loden Sherab and Phya pa Chöskyi Senge.

5. That is, the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas.

truly exist are also thereby refuted. **[254]** Therefore, these refutatory arguments strike against all of them equally.

1.3.2 Refutation of the argument for those interpretations

This section has two parts: refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of that which is arisen from others and refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of emptiness.

1.3.2.1 Refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of that which is arisen from others

This section has two parts: refutation by showing that essence and transformation into another are inconsistent and refutation by showing that it is impossible for transformation into another to exist inherently.

1.3.2.1.1 Refutation by showing that essence and transformation into another are inconsistent

> 4cd. If there were nature,
> How could there be transformation?

It is said that anything inextricable from a phenomenon is its essence because it cannot be displaced by anything else. This must be like the heat of fire being inextricable from the fire. If the nature of things existed essentially, how could the essence proposed transform into something else? It could not. Transformation into something else is perceived. So there is no essential existence. Thus he contraposes. That is conventional transformation.

1.3.2.1.2 Refutation by showing that it is impossible for transformation into another to exist inherently

> 5. A thing itself is without transformation.
> Nor is transformation in something else,
> Because a young man does not age,
> And because an aged man does not age either.

Anything that endures in its previous state cannot transform into something else. This is because "to transform into something else" is a synonym of

"to age." So, the youth who endures in the state of adolesence would not age. That is, he would be without aging, because if he were to endure in that state, it would not be tenable that he transforms from an adolescent into something else.

One might say that it is not asserted that aging is present in the youth, but that the aged age. But aging is also not present in some other aged one[6] because someone who is already aged does not need to age again. Here, according to *Prasannapadā*, the two states of being aged and remaining young are mutually exclusive. [82b] Buddhapālita refutes the youth aging on the grounds that the two states of being aged and being young cannot occur **[255]** in the same person at the same time [218b]. Here is what he means: The ceasing of Lhejin's state of youth and the arising of his state of aging occur at the same time.[7] However, even we must accept conventionally that the two states in question cannot occur at the same time.

Therefore, as was explained earlier in the context of the refutation of arising, the inherent existence of the transformation of something into something else is refuted by showing that this would entail falsely that the two states exist at the same time. If it is asserted that the aged person who is other does not age, but instead that the transformation of the youth himself into an aged person who is other exists inherently, then milk itself, without giving up its own state, would become yoghurt.

> 6. If a thing itself transformed,
> Milk itself would become yoghurt.
> But what other than milk
> Could become the entity that is yoghurt?

Suppose one said that since the milk, having given up its own state, has transformed into the state of yoghurt, the milk itself does not become yoghurt. If one did not maintain that, since milk and yoghurt are mutually inconsistent, the milk itself becomes yoghurt, then what stuff other than milk would transform into yoghurt? Nothing would, because other stuff like yoghurt itself and water do not transform into yoghurt. The convention of saying that an earlier phenomenon transforms into a later one is relevant to youth and age, and to yoghurt and milk, but with respect to cause and effect like fire and fuel there is no mundane convention of saying that the fuel transforms into fire.

Thus, since it is impossible for transformation into another to exist inherently, the inherent existence of impermanent objects is not the meaning of

6. The other aged one here is the youth who has become old, not his grandfather!

7. Here *'gag zhin pa* and *skye bzhin pa* must be read as *the process* of arising and *the process* of aging. Tsong khapa is referring to the fact that these two processes are occuring at the same time.

In *Prasannapadā* these examples, drawn from the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra*, occur only in the commentary to verse eight. See below for references.

the statement that compounded phenomena are false and deceptive. Instead, the meaning of these sūtras is that entities are not inherently arisen. Thus, the *Ratnākara-sūtra* says;

> As phenomena are unarisen they do not come into being, [*mDo sde* tha 261b]

and later it says,

> Having been liberated, he liberates many other sentient beings, [262b]

[256] and it also says,

> All phenomena are presented as selfless.
> Through guiding sentient beings, the world is liberated.
> He himself is liberated from transmigration, and transmigrators are liberated.
> Though he has passed beyond, he has not crossed over.
>
> The Great Sage has passed beyond cyclic existence.
> That which has passed beyond is not found.
> Neither the other shore nor this shore exists.
> "Gone beyond" is also said to be mere words.
>
> He who expreses words does not exist.
> The words that are expressed do not exist.
> They to whom they are expressed are also not found.
> He by whom this is known also does not exist.
>
> Through being wrongly conceived through the power of attachment,
> All of the transmigrators wander here.
> Whoever sees the peaceful dharma
> Sees the self-originated Thathāgata,
>
> The peaceful supreme dharma is understood.
> Obtaining bliss, beings are satisfied.
> Having conquered the afflictions, he is victorious.
> Having become victorious, he does not endure.
>
> Thus, the Victor's enlightenment is realized.
> Having achieved enlightenment he enlightens transmigrators.
> [262a]

This passage shows the disadvantages of not understanding, and the benefits of understanding, that a thing does not transform into another, and that no nature is found.

1.3.2.2 Refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of emptiness

This section has two parts: the main point and the refutation of the claim that this contradicts sūtras.

1.3.2.2.1 The main point

> 7. If there were even the slightest bit nonempty,
> Emptiness itself would be the slightest bit existent.
> But when not there is not even the slightest nonempty thing,
> How could emptiness exist?

As was explained earlier, the absence of inherent existence of things does not exist, because all things are maintained to be empty. Therefore, it makes no sense to say that the entities that are the bases of emptiness exist essentially, because if emptiness existed inherently even the slightest bit, then there could be the slightest bit of its basis existing inherently, that is, as nonempty. But since here emptiness and selflessness are asserted to be the universal characteristics of all pheomena, there is not the slightest thing empty of self. **[257]** Then how could emptiness exist inherently? It could not. The antidote, being free from dependence, would be like a sky flower.

The statement in sūtra that all phenomena are selfless is accepted by both reificationist schools. As both masters maintain, inherent existence is the self, absence of which is selflessness. *Prasannapadā* has already correctly explained this. Buddhapālita asks how emptiness could exist, since analysis shows that there is not the slightest nonempty thing. That is the meaning of "all things are selfless," and thus their accounts are similar [219b].

Suppose it were maintained that emptiness were even the slightest bit truly existent. Then one would undoubtedly have to maintain that that which it qualifies—the basis—is at least the slightest bit truly existent. This is because it is impossible for the quality to exist without the qualified phenomenon on which it is grounded, and it would be contradictory for something truly existent to be grounded in something whose existence is false. Thus, the mādhyamika and the reificationist agree about this point. But the reificationist maintains that both emptiness and its basis are truly existent. The mādhyamika, on the other hand, says that since the basis is not truly existent, emptiness is not truly existent either.

The yogācāra masters, seeing that in order for the consummate to truly exist, that on which it depends—the other-dependent nature—must truly exist,

argue that the other-dependent truly exists. This is because if it truly existed, the true existence of its emptiness would follow immediately, and if it does not truly exist, just in virtue of that its quality cannot truly exist. Therefore, claims at variance with these assertions would not be in accordance with the systems of either our upper or lower schools, and thus these claims should simply be discarded. *Bodhicaryāvatāra* says:

> Whenever anything is said to be nonexistent
> And the entity to be examined is not observed, **[258]**
> Then how could the entitilessness, without a basis,
> Be present before the mind? [IX: 33]

This does not show that the basis of negation of the object of negation exists; but instead it shows that since there are no truly existent entities, nonentity—that is, emptiness, or truth—lacks a basis.

1.3.2.2.2 Refutation of the claim that this contradicts sūtras

This section has two parts: explanation of the meaning of the treatises and the presentation of the source treatises.

1.3.2.2.2.1 Explanation of the meaning of the treatises

One might argue as follows: In order to liberate sentient beings the Transcendent Lord taught the three doors of liberation, *viz.* emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness. This teaching is not common to the non-Buddhist schools. Therefore these statements are found only in the teachings of the Transcendent Lord and you, pretending to be interpreting the teaching, are discarding emptiness. I have argued enough with you who dismantle the continuous path to enlightenment!

> 8. The victorious ones have said
> That emptiness is the elimination of all views.
> Anyone for whom emptiness is a view
> Is incorrigible.

You poor man! Having succumbed to seriously deviant views, and having abandoned the direct path that leads to the city of liberation, you are constricted by the serpent of fixation on entitihood and entitilessness as truly existent. Thus you wander in cyclic existence, regarding the path into the forest of cyclic existence as the path to liberation. Subject to condemnation by the noble ones, instead you condemn them! Hey! The great lord of physicians and of the victors has said that emptiness is the view that allows one to abandon and to eliminate

all grasping. This is the mere relinquishing of all views regarding things as truly existent. And a mere relinquishing does not exist inherently! Thus it is said that anyone who regards emptiness as inherently existent will accomplish nothing; that is, he is incurable.

This is similar to a case where someone says, "I have no goods to give you." And the other person says, "Give me what you call 'no goods'!" The two masters say that this opponent is like the one who cannot be convinced that he does not have any goods. **[259]** When, in order to convince the other person that he has no goods to give, he utters that sentence, it is not that he cannot be convinced; but the idea that he has "no goods" as goods should not arise [*Buddhapālita* 219b and *Prasannapadā* 83b].

Similarly, when it is demonstrated that entities do not exist inherently, it is not that one should not take them to be truly empty, but that one should not take the entities' emptiness of true existence to be truly existent. Therefore, to maintain that this text[8] shows that if you take phenomena to be empty you will be incurable would be to make a strong claim with no justification.

According to both of these masters, to hold emptiness as a *view*[9] means to be fixated on emptiness as an *entity*—that is, to grasp emptiness as truly existent or as existing inherently. So how could this be to grasp emptiness as mere essencelessness? The *Commentary to the Catuḥśataka* says,

> If it were there were anything called emptiness that exists inherently, then there would be objects with essence. But this is not the case. As it is said:[10]
>
> Without that which is not emptiness,
> How could there be emptiness?
> Just as without another
> How could there be the antidote? [*dBu ma* ya 232b]

The commentary quotes this verse. Both this and the earlier texts refute the assertions of the śrāvaka schools that emptiness truly exists. But this does not refute the mere existence of selflessness. So if you misunderstand the meanings of these texts, you would repudiate the truth by saying that the ultimate truth is incoherent. Or even if you say that it is coherent, if you develop an ascertainment that grasps it as truly existent **[260]** this would be a great hindrance to the the proper ascertainment of the correct meaning and the development the view.

8. The *Ratnākuṭa-sūtra* [*dKon brtsegs* cha 132b].

9. This is actually a quotation of XIII: 8c *stong pa nyid du lta ba*, but because of how we have represented the grammar of the verse and the grammar of this sentence for clarity in English these phrases look a bit different.

10. Tsong khapa has *zhes bshad pa* but sDe dge has *zhes bstan pa'i phyir*, which would read, *In order to explain this.*

1.3.2.2.2.2 Presentation of the source treatises

The source sūtra we have been explaining is the *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* and from within that it is the *Kāśyapa parivarta-sūtra*. And it says,

> That which is emptiness does not empty phenomena, because[11] phenomena themselves are empty; that which is signlessness does not make phenomena signless, because phenomena themselves are signless; that which is wishlessness does not make phenomena wishless, because phenomena themselves are wishless. To so analyze, oh Kāśyapa, is called the middle path—in the correct analysis of phenomena. Oh, Kāśyapa, I say that whoever analyzes emptiness by objectifying emptiness has fallen, fallen far from my teachings. [*dkon brtsegs* cha 132a]

The statements that such things as emptiness do not empty phenomena but that phenomena themselves are empty etc., means that it should not be taken that phenomena that are not themselves truly empty are truly emptied by something else. When it says that to conceptualize emptiness is to have fallen far, the mode of that conceptualization is, as it is said in "whoever objectifies emptiness," the objectification of emptiness as truly existent, but it is not just the conceputalization of emptiness as "this is emptiness." Otherwise, it would be contradictory to say immediately that the analysis of these three, including emptiness, is the middle path. The method of the application of the example to that which it illustrates in the case of "whoever views emptiness is incurable" is, as the sūtra puts it,

> Kāśyapa, it is like this, for example: There is a sick man and the physician gives him some medicine, and the medicine cures his illness completely. If that medicine remains in his stomach and is not expelled, what do you think, Kāśyapa? Has the person really been cured? **[261]** He responds, "Oh, Transcendent Lord, of course not. Even if that medicine has cured his illness completely, if the medicine is not expelled from his stomach, that man's stomach-ache would be wrenching." The Transcendent Lord then replied, "Oh, Kāśyapa, in exactly the same way, when emptiness is that which eliminates all views, I call someone incurable who adopts emptiness as a view." [*Kon brtsegs* cha 132b]

The medicine cured his previous indigestion, but then, due to its own indigestibility, gave rise to a new sickness. This example represents the two

11. Reading *gang dag* as *gang* following the sDe dge edition of the text.

Buddhist reificationist schools' thesis that selflessness truly exists and the thesis of several previous scholars from the Land of Snows[12] that, although the thesis that things can withstand ultimate rational analysis has been refuted, emptiness truly exists. Realizing emptiness as that which refutes the object of negation eliminates many of the manifest illnesses of affliction, but grasping emptiness as truly existent gives rise to the illnesses of afflictions.

For those who take either of two other approaches—taking things as empty or taking things as nonempty—while taking things as empty in this way is not refuted by authoritative cognition, it becomes deprecation. Since it does not correspond to the previous example, taking things as nonempty also gives rise to the illnesses of affliction.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

The confirmations by profound sūtras of the demonstrations that, although no compounded phenomena exist inherently, they appear to do so, that it is impossible for anything that exists inherently to transform into anything else, and that emptiness, which is the emptiness of true existence, does not truly exist have been provided in their respective contexts and should so be understood.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

The sense in which that which is false is false is that although they appear to do so, things do not exist through their own characteristics. Since all agents and actions are tenable in this sense, **[262]** "false" should not to be taken to mean *empty of the phenomena of agent and action*. Impermanence and transformation should be understood in the same way. Emptiness, that is, the negation of the true existence of that which is false, does not truly exist. However, it is not the case that it is nonexistent. Those who aspire to liberation must ascertain perfectly the objects of the path on which one should concentrate in meditation in order to eliminate the obscurations.

This is the commentary on the thirteenth chapter, having eight verses, called "the examination of compounded phenomena."

12. Probably principally Dolbuwa Sherab Gyaltsen.

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CHAPTER XIV

Examination of Contact

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of contact
    1.1.1 Setting out the conclusion
    1.1.2 Presentation of the argument
      1.1.2.1 Refutation of contact on the grounds that the other does not exist essentially
        1.1.2.1.1 Presentation of the formal argument
        1.1.2.1.2 Application of this argument to other phenomena
        1.1.2.1.3 The demonstration that the argument is valid
          1.1.2.1.3.1 Presentation of the premise
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  1.2 Demonstration that this refutes things being in the process of contact
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the second part of the second major section of the text—that on the two selflessnesses—the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. We have completed the first part of that section: the refutation of the essential existence of things. **[262:7]** We now begin the second of those

two parts: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of things. This part has three sections: the refutation of the essential existence of contact, the refutation of the essential existence of appropriation of causes and conditions, and the refutation of the essential existence of bondage and liberation. This chapter is the first of those three parts. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here someone might argue as follows: Things exist essentially because their contact is presented, because it says frequently in sūtra that, depending on eye and material form, visual consciousness arises. And depending on the assembly of these three, there is contact. That which arises along with contact is feeling.[1] In the same way these two phenomena called "feeling" and "discrimination" are in contact and are not out of contact. Attachment, anger, and ignorance—the three overpowering passions—overpower one. Thus, all compound phenomena involve contact.

Refuting this thesis has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of contact and the demonstration that this refutes things being in the process of contact.

1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of contact

This section has two parts: setting out the conclusion and the presentation of the argument. **[263]**

1.1.1 Setting out the conclusion

1. The seen, seeing, and the seer;
These three—neither pairwise nor
All together—do not
Exist in contact with each other.

The simultaneous contact of the three—the seen material form, the seeing eye, and the consciousness which is the seer—do not exist essentially: neither

1. In the title of this chapter and throughout, we translate *phrad pa* as contact. But here Tsong khapa is using *reg pa* which is a synonym. We are using *contact,* for lack of a better word, for both.

does their pairwise contact, *viz.*, that of eye and material form, eye and consciousness, consciousness and material form, nor does the joint contact of the three of them all together.

> 2. Similarly, desire, the desirous, and the desired
> And the remaining afflictions,
> And the remaining faculties,
> Should be regarded in this threefold way.

Just as we explained with reference to the three (seeing, etc.) the simultaneous contact of the three—neither their pairwise contact, *viz*. that of desire and the desirous, desire and the desired, the desirous and the desired, nor the joint contact of the three of them all together—should be regarded as existing. In exactly the same way, this threefold approach should be understood to apply to the remaining affictions such as aversion and confusion, etc., and the remaining faculties, such as hearing, the hearer, and the heard: Neither when each triad is considered all together nor when its members are considered pairwise does contact exist inherently.

1.1.2 Presentation of the argument

This section has two parts: refutation of contact on the grounds that the other does not exist essentially, and refutation of contact through analysis into whether it is the same or different.

1.1.2.1 Refutation of contact on the grounds that the other does not exist essentially

This section has three parts: presentation of the formal argument, application of this argument to other phenomena, and demonstration that the argument is valid.

1.1.2.1.1 Presentation of the formal argument

> 3. Since different things contact one another,
> But in such things as seeing
> There is no difference,
> They cannot make contact.

If the occurrence of contact existed inherently, the different things that contact each other would have to exist inherently.[2] Having established the contrapositive categorization, using the premise "the other—such as the seen—does not exist inherently," one draws the conclusion, "they do not have inherently existent contact."

1.1.2.1.2 Application of this argument to other phenomena

> 4. Not only with respect to such things as the seen
> Is there no such difference:
> When one thing and another are simultaneous,
> It is also not tenable that there is difference.

Moreover, not only is it not the case that entities existing as cause and effect, such as the seen, lack inherent difference; it is not tenable that *any* entity, such as pots or cloth **[264]** that exist simultaneously are inherently different. Therefore, this implies that their being in contact with each other does not exist inherently because it is intended to show that there is no inherently existent contact between any entities.

1.1.2.1.3 Demonstration that the argument is valid

This section has two parts: presentation of the premise and rebutting charges against it.

1.1.2.1.3.1 Presentation of the premise

> 5. One different thing depends on another for its difference.
> Without a different thing, another would not be different.
> It is not tenable for that which depends on something else
> To be different from it.

The different thing in the statement "the pot is different from the cloth" is posited as different in dependence on another thing, *viz.*, the cloth. Without depending on the other object—the cloth as a ground of difference—the other, the pot, would not be different from the cloth. This first establishes that whatever is posited as different depends for its being posited as another on something different and then thereby establishes the categorical thesis that it is not

2. We use *other* and *different* for *gzhan* depending on context.

tenable for any dependent phenomenon to be inherently different from that on which it depends. Thereafter this is applied to the specific case: the pot, being different from the cloth, is also dependent upon the cloth; therefore, it is not inherently different from the cloth.

1.1.2.1.3.2 Rebutting charges against it

This section has two parts: rebutting the charge that it commits the fallacy of accident and rebutting the charge that the premise is not established.

1.1.2.1.3.2.1 Rebutting the charge that it commits the fallacy of accident

Suppose someone says that the pot, being different from the cloth, depends upon the cloth and at the same time is inherently different from it. What would the error be?

> 6. If one different thing were different from another,
> Without another, a thing could be different.
> But without that other, that different thing does not exist.
> Therefore this is not the case.

If the different thing, the pot, existed as inherently different from the other, the cloth, then without depending on the other—the cloth—as a ground of difference, the pot all by itself could be designated as different from the cloth. But this does not occur.

Depending on the cloth and not depending on the cloth are mutually exclusive. The pot's being different from the cloth is dependent on the cloth. If that other existed inherently, then in virtue of its nature, it would be existent through its own power. Therefore, it would be contradictory for it to depend on the other. **[265]** This would be unreasonable[3] because, to contrapose, without depending on the other—the cloth—the pot would not be different from the cloth; so the pot is not inherently different from the cloth. The *Catuḥśataka* puts this argument this way:

> Whatever is dependently arisen
> Cannot be independent.
> None of this is independent.
> So all of it is selfless. [XIV: 23]

3. What is unreasonable is something's being both inherently existent and depending on another, *not* these two being contradictory.

The "self" is explained in the *Commentary to the Catuḥśataka* as inherently existent essence. [*dBu ma* ya 20b]

Here, as the *Commentary* says, the pot's being different from the cloth is dependent upon the cloth, but the existence of the pot as an entity does not depend on the cloth. [85b] A distinction should be drawn between what is and what is not dependent. One should remember that this is a crucial point; this distinctive kind of argument occurs throughout the text.

Suppose someone says: If you do not posit *any* different thing, how could "a different thing depends on another for its difference" [5a] make sense? Since the others are established in mutual dependence according to mundane convention, they are posited as different. Buddhapālita says,

> Things are different in virtue of mundane convention. [221b]

Here, the *Commentary*, in response to the question, "If the pot and cloth are posited as different in mundane convention, then why not say that the seed and sprout are also different?" explains the distinction between ordinary people *holding* the pot and cloth to be different and their *not holding* the seed and the sprout to be different. [86a] The explanation goes as follows: While an innate mental process grasps the pot and the cloth each as existing through its own characteristic, it does *not* so grasp the seed and sprout. But, this does not mean that conventionally, although the pot and cloth are different, the seed and sprout are not.

The argument that the innate mental process does not grasp each thing as existing distinctly through its own characteristic has been explained earlier with respect to the cause and effect of appropriation. **[266]** Although even conventionally there is no existence through their characteristic of the pot and cloth, their being *merely* different exists conventionally. This is because, as has been explained, their being different is dependently originated and both commentaries have also explained that this exists conventionally [*Prasannapadā* 85b, *Buddhapālita* 221b].

The main point of the argument that the six sensory consciousnesses and the six sense faculties and their objects, such as the eye and material form, do not exist as inherently different is to refute the essential existence of contact. Its premises are provided by "if a different thing were different from another . . . " [6a] and "it is not tenable for that which depends on something else . . . " [5c], etc. Therefore the difference between the six sensory consciousnesses and their respective objects and faculties must be demonstrated to be dependently arisen. Thus cause and effect as well are *merely* different from one another.

If that were not the case, since they would be neither identical to nor different from one another, it would follow that they do not exist. This is because, if, for that which *merely* exists, being different from and being identical to one another were not mutually exclusive, then the certainty that that which *truly* exists must be *truly* identical or different could not be established as well.

Suppose that one then said, "Then it would follow that arising from another would exist conventionally!" Since *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says that according to our own system the hermeneutical approach to the sūtras is presented through the framework of the three natures, conventionally, even the other-dependent has to be posited [283a].

However, this is not like arising from another! This is because those who hold the concept of arising from another and who use that language do so on the basis of a philosophical analysis into whether effects are arisen from themselves or from something else. They do *not* conduct an analysis into whether or not an effect is *merely* arisen from itself or from another, but by conducting an analysis into whether or not they are *inherently* different, they use "arising from another" to refer to that which arises from something different through its own characteristic. The term "other-dependent" **[267]** in order to reject the idea that effects are arisen through their own power, indicates that they are *merely* dependent on the power of causes and conditions. Being *essentially* different does not follow from being *merely* different.

1.1.2.1.3.2.2 Rebutting the charge that the premise is not established

The Kaṇāda argue as follows: If the idea of difference came from one different thing depending on another different thing, those would not be essentially different from each other. But we do not say this. Difference is a universal as well as a particular.[4] An entity in which this[5] is instantiated does not depend on another entity. However, it can be said that it is different. Therefore we do not commit the errors with which we are charged.

> 7. Difference is not in a different thing.
> Nor is it in a nondifferent thing.
> If difference does not exist,
> Neither difference nor identity exists.

In response to this, we say, this universal of difference instantiated in the particular other does not exist as another object because it is not necessary to posit existent difference as another existing object. This is because to posit it that way is to establish it as other; but the particular already exists as other. Even worse, nor can you claim that a thing which is not other instantiates the universal of difference as a different object, because according to you, identity

4. That is, it is a particular instance of a higher-order universal as well as a universal of which individual instances of otherness are particular instances.

5. *Viz.*, being a universal.

exists, which is inconsistent with otherness existing as another object. Since there is no third alternative besides identity and difference, the universal of difference is not instantiated in either of them as another object.

Suppose someone says that although we have denied the reality of the universal of difference, the other exists; without difference there is no other; thus, the universal of difference must exist. Since as has been previously explained, the universal of otherness does not exist, neither difference nor identity—sameness—exists inherently. The *Buddhapālita* provides two different interpretations of this verse, which are not similar to the way it has been just explained. [221b–222b][6]

1.1.2.2 Refutation of contact through analysis into whether it is the same or different

Suppose someone argued as follows: Although it has already been explained that the other, such as seeing, does not exist, since it is said that contact is the assembly of the three, **[268]** contact must exist essentially. Therefore, such things as seeing exist essentially.

> 8. Nothing contacts itself.
> Nor does one different thing contact another.

In response to this we ask: If contact existed essentially in such things as seeing, then would such things as seeing be inherently identical to or different from each other? In the first case, no phenomenon contacts itself, as one cannot say that without depending on water, the milk all by itself can contact water. One different thing that is inherently different does not contact the other, as one cannot say that when water and milk are in different places, the milk contacts the water.

1.2 Demonstration that this refutes things being in the process of contact

Suppose someone argued as follows: When two things are combined into one, there is no contact; nor is there contact between things put in different places. Therefore, although you have denied the existence of contact since contacting that which is other exists, contact also exists.

6. The *Buddhapālita* presents three interpretations, one of which is an embryonic form of that Candrakīrti presents. It also presents a reading according to which the verse rejects the essential existence of difference in either different entity on the grounds of the relativity of difference and another reading according to which the verse rejects the essential existence of difference on the grounds of the inconstancy of the relation.

> 8c. Neither that which is being contacted,
> Nor the contact, nor the contactor exists.

If that which is being contacted existed inherently as a single thing, it could not contact itself; if on the other hand it existed inherently as something other, it would not be tenable that it makes contact. It would follow that all that is not in contact would be contacted. Suppose it were maintained that a part of it makes contact. Then if by contacting a single part it makes contact with the whole, whether you maintain that it is a single part or two different parts,[7] this has been refuted by demonstrating the errors concerning difference. Therefore, the obejct that accomplishes the activity of contact—that which is being contacted—does not exist.

Suppose one said that although that which is being contacted does not exist, that is all right:[8] The contact exists. But when there is nothing that is being contacted, when there is no effort to contact, there could be no contact—that is, the completion of the activity.

Suppose one said that although there is no completion of the activity of contact, that is all right: prior to the existence of the first one—contact—the other, which is the contactor of the entity to be contacted, exists. But when that does not exist, without the activity of contact, the agent of contact cannot independently exist to accomplish the activity of contact.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

[269] A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that the demonstration that the sense faculties, their objects and such things as the sensory consciousnesses, and such things as the eye and material form do not inherently contact each other can also be corroborated by profound scriptures, and to demonstrate that all of the scriptures which refute the contact and possession of phenomena are explained by this chapter. The *Upālipariprcchā-sūtra* says,

> If the eye is associated with everything, it sees
>
> . . .
>
> Therefore, the eye never sees. [*dKon brtseg* ca 129a]

Later, it says,

7. Following *Buddhapālita* [223b], this should be read as indicating the thing contacting either being one thing in contact, in virtue of the whole being in contact, or two parts: the part in contact and that part not in contact.

8. Tsong khapa uses *bla'i,* but the *Buddhapālita* in the same sentence at [223b] uses *zla'i*—easily. This could be an early scribal error, a reading of a different edition of the *Buddhapālita,* or a deliberate change of the sentence.

When they understand phenomena to be essenceless,
Those courageous ones transcend the world.
Although they enjoy the benefits of desire, they are without attachment.
Having eliminated attachment they calm sentient beings.

Here although there are neither sentient beings nor life,
These supreme human beings benefit sentient beings.
Although sentient beings do not exist, they benefit them.
Their practice is very difficult. [*dKon brtseg* ca 130a]

And after that, it says,

Those who aspire to see reality
Do not have any attachment.
Their minds are not attached to cyclic existence. [*dKon brtseg* ca 131a]

. . .

This demonstrates the benefits of understanding the absence of contact and possession with respect to the such things as the eye and in the context of such things as attachment.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

While if the contact, possession, coalescing, and collection of phenomena existed through their own power they could not be posited, one should be firm in one's ascertainment, through the framework of the two truths, of the tenability of all of these things when they are posited as essenceless.

This is the commentary on the fourteenth chapter, having eight verses, called "the examination of contact."

CHAPTER XV

Examination of Essence

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of things
    1.1.1 Refutation of the argument for inherent existence
      1.1.1.1 The main point
        1.1.1.1.1 Demonstration that cause and effect are not necessary in the context of essential existence and that they are inconsistent with it
        1.1.1.1.2 Presentation of the defining characteristic of essence in our system
      1.1.1.2 Demonstration that thereby the other three extremes are refuted
      1.1.1.3 Condemnation of the reificationist view of the meaning of those refutations
    1.1.2 Undermining inherent existence
      1.1.2.1 Undermining it through sūtra
      1.1.2.2 Undermining it through reasoning
  1.2 Demonstration that maintaining that things exist essentially cannot avoid the extremes
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the second part of the section on the two selflessnesses, the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. We are still in the second of its two sections: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of things. We have completed the first of the three parts of that

section: the refutation of contact. This chapter comprises the second part: the refutation of the appropriation of causes and conditions as essentially existent.[1] **[270]** It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here one might say that things exist essentially, because there is appropriation of such things as causes, conditions, seeds, and ignorance, which give rise to such things as sprouts and actions, respectively. This is the motivational introduction to the chapter in *Prasannapadā,* [87b] but Buddhapālita motivates it as follows:

> You maintain that all phenomena are dependently arisen and at the same time that they are not inherently existent. But how could things arise and not exist inherently? If the nature of things does not arise from causes and conditions, then what else could arise from them? If the nature of the cloth does not come from the warp and weft, do they simply give rise to warp and weft themselves? If nothing arises from them, why do we say "It arises"?
> We respond: Are you not the man riding the horse who does not see that horse? While you say that things are dependently arisen, you do not see that they are not inherently existent? [224a]

Thus, this provides a motivational introduction to this chapter, which explains that it is not contradictory to say that it is inconsistent for things to have even the slightest nature of inherent existence and to be arisen from causes and conditions. The most important point of this argument is to distinguish rather than to confuse these two.

The refutation of essence has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of things and the demonstration that maintaining that things exist essentially cannot avoid the extremes.

1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of things

This section has two parts: the refutation of the argument for inherent existence and undermining inherent existence.

1. There is a slight paraphrase of the description of the topic of this chapter: *bdag gir byed pa* is used in the earlier outline; *nye bar len pa* is used here for *appropriation.*

1.1.1 Refutation of the argument for inherent existence

This section has three parts: the main point, the demonstration that thereby the other three extremes are refuted, **[271]** and condemnation of the reificationist view of the meaning of those refutations.

1.1.1.1 The main point

This section has two parts: the demonstration that cause and effect are not necessary in the context of essence and that they are inconsistent with it, and the presentation of the defining characteristic of essence in our system.

1.1.1.1.1 Demonstration that cause and effect are not necessary in the context of essential existence and that they are inconsistent with it

1. Essence arising from
Causes and conditions makes no sense.
Essence arisen from causes and conditions
Would be created.

If actions or such things as sprouts had essential existence, then it would make no sense for them to arise from causes and conditions such as ignorance or seeds because that which exists esentially does not need anything to bring it into existence.

Suppose someone said: If a thing existed prior to its arising then there would be no point in its arising again; but that very essence which does not exist earlier arises depending on causes and conditions. In that case, since it has arisen in dependence on causes and conditions, that which has the nature of the effect would be created. Suppose one then said that she or he accepts the consequence that it is created. Candrakīrti asks, "How could it make sense that it is an essence and also created?" [88a] It cannot, because they are mutually exclusive. Since the two—being created and being uncreated—are mutually exclusive, if one is eliminated in one basis, the other must be affirmed in that basis. The created is categorized as constructed. Since essence, which is nature, is categorized as unconstructed, being created and being a nature cannot be co-present in the same basis, like the heat of water or, just as in

everyday life, when a chemist makes such things as an artificial *padma rā ga out* of such ingredients as *ke ke ru*, it is not called their essence.[2]

But suppose one argued as follows: In everyday life, since the heat of the fire and such things as the *padma rā ga,* which have the nature of being naturally developed,[3] is called their essence, how could it be that everything created is not a nature?

In everyday life, when something is constructed, we do not ordinarily say that it is a nature or essence. We also accept this and therefore we assert that, **[272]** although in everyday life the heat of fire is known as the essence or nature of fire, it is *not* the nature of fire because it lacks the characteristic of a nature. This is because fire is seen to occur in dependence on such things as a burning glass as causes and conditions, and similarly for its heat. Therefore, it can be clearly ascertained that since it is created, just like the heat of water, it is not an essence. Although the heat of the fire and the heat of the water are similar in that they are both created by causes and conditions, they are not similar with respect to whether or not they are constructed. Thus, although they are also not similar with respect to whether or not they are known as essences in everyday life, reificationists do not draw the distinction between the arisen heat of water and the arisen heat of fire in terms of whether or not they are essentially arisen. Thus, in everyday life, if something is regarded as constructed, it is not accepted that there is no way to call it an essence. In our own system we accept that.

Fools, being fixated on the essence of essenceless things, seeing that in those very phenomena, but not seeing it in other phenomena, just as they are fixated on heat being the characteristic of fire, maintain that it is a characteristic because it is said that the characteristic is that in virtue of which one exists through one's own characteristic.

In accordance with their understanding, the teacher, in the *Abhidharma*, also set out the individual natures of these things as conventional. He explained that such things as impermanence, which are commonly shared with others, are universal characteristics. So neither does heat as the nature of fire nor impermanence as that of the produced exist conventionally. However, it is explained in the *Abhidharma* that a characteristic is universal or particular in

2. Tsong khapa is following *Prasannapadā* at [88a], where the Tibetan translation omits one phrase present in the Sanskrit, *dhātupisacapratyayaniṣpāditaḥ*, that is, *produced with elements and spirits as conditions*, implicating a bit of alchemy in the process. The translators are not familiar with the details of this process, the ingredients, or the object being created, despite its being part of everyday life.

3. *Rigs ma'i ngo bo*. Here we presume that *rigs ma* is a mistranslation of *jātānām* ("naturally developed"), reading it as *jāti* ("kind"), probably based on a version of *Prasannapadā* resulting from a scribal error in the Sanskrit original or a simple misreading by a translator. There is no other way to make sense of this sentence or the corresponding sentence at *Prasannapadā* [88a] which reads *rigs ma'i ngo bo,* and hence is equally weird. Moreover, the phrase "the heat of the fire and *padma rāga*, etc., which have the nature of being naturally developed" comes from the Tibetan edition of *Prasannapadā*, which is a mistranslation of the Sanskrit, which would read "the heat of the fire and the nature of the naturally developed *padma rāga,* etc."

virtue of either being or not being shared. They exist conventionally in our own system exactly as this is presented in the *Abhidharma*. Therefore there is a big difference between something existing through its own characteristic and existing inherently, on the one hand, and a thing having a particular characteristic that is not shared, on the other. **[273]**

The statement in the *Commentary* that "the *Abhidharma* has explained the particular and universal characteristics of phenomena in accordance with their understanding" [88b] means that fools grasp the characteristics of phenomena as their natures, and therefore that without refuting this, these two natures are explained to them. This does not mean that the *Abhidharma* also presents the two kinds of characteristics *as natures* in the way that we grasp such things as the heat of the fire as its nature. According to the *Madhyamakāvatāra*,

> Although the Buddha through the approach taken in the *Prajñāpāramitā*
> Eliminates them equally, in the *Abhidharma* they are presented. [VI: 92]

The *Commentary* also demonstrates, in the *Abhidharma,* through such things as the classification of universal and particular characteristics, the five aggregates are presented as having the same status. But in the *"Mother" sūtra*[4] [*Sher phyin* kha 20a] all five are presented as essentially empty [88b]. Therefore, they are explained to be equally ultimately nonexistent and equally conventionally existent. And the heat of the fire being its nature is not accepted even conventionally. The reason that we say that this is accepted by others is not that *we* don't accept such things as the heat of fire as its nature. But since we do not accept the heat of the fire and the nature of the fire as identical without distinguishing them, that is presented as merely "accepted by others."

1.1.1.1.2 Presentation of the defining characteristic of essence in our system

Suppose one asked, "Since it is said that if something is created it is not an essence, then what is the characteristic of essence, and what is essence?"

> 2\. How could it be appropriate
> To call that which is created "essence"?
> Essence itself is not constructed
> And does not depend on another.

4\. The 8,000 verse *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*.

Here, a thing's nature is called its essence. Therefore, it is said that whatever nature belongs to a thing is its essence. What is that which belongs to it? The unconstructed characteristics of the characterized. That which is constructed is not that which belongs to it like, for example, the heat of the water. Whatever does not depend on another is also that which belongs to it like, for example, **[274]** one's servant or one's wealth. That which depends on another is not that which belongs to the self, just as, for example, a debtor is not a debtor all by himself. By saying this, he does not mean that no phemonema that are constructed and that depend on other phenomena belong to those phenomena; but instead presents that which is regarded as the essence or nature of a phenomenon, which has to belong to it, as having to be nonconstructed and not, like a debtor, dependent on another.

Therefore, the essence of fire is defined as follows: the intrinsic nature of fire, not constructed, not newly arisen without having existed earlier, and in all three temporal periods inextricable from fire; not—like the heat of water or the far shore and the near shore or the long and short—dependent on other causes and conditions.

Suppose someone asked, "If the nature of fire is like that, does it exist?" It is said that it neither exists inherently nor is it nonexistent. This means that, although it exists, it does not exist inherently. As the *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says,

> The ultimate, through being the special object of the insight of those who see perfectly, is found to be the self's own nature, but is not the self's inherent existence. [253a]

It is said that even though, as presented here, things do not exist inherently, the claim that things exist conventionally is fabricated in order to allay the anxiety of those who hear this. Here it does not make sense to say that since things are said to exist just for that reason, the ultimate is not knowable. Candrakīrti says,

> This is because *Sañcayagāthā* says,
>
> In order to allay the anxiety of ordinary beings, things are said to arise and cease through the power of convention. [*mDo sde* Sha 43a]

It would then follow that arising and ceasing as well are not objects of knowledge. Saying that "fabricated" means that the ultimate is not an object of knowledge does not make sense. **[275]** As a proof that things exist through fabrication the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* is quoted:

> Without letters, how could the teaching
> Be presented and heard, and by what teacher?

> That which is fabricated is without letters,
> And can neither be heard nor taught.[5]

Therefore, since all these phenomena, including the listener and the speaker and the speech, are said to be fabricated, it would also follow that they are not objects of knowledge. Therefore, since there are many places where "fabricated" refers to that which is presented by mental imputation, it is not necessary that the two selves are similar in the respect that they are both fabricated.[6]

Suppose someone asked, "How could it be said that things exist through fabrication?" Here, "Their own nature is that which is the reality of phenomena . . ." [*Prasannapadā* 89b] is the response to this second question.[7] That reality is the nature of phenomena, that nature is essence, that essence is emptiness, that emptiness is essencelessness, and that is the way things are and that is the immutable nature of the way things really are, and it is eternally existent. If objects really existed as they are perceived through the mists of ignorance, they would have to be so perceived through the uncontaminated insight of the noble beings in meditative equipoise. But although from that perspective they are not perceived even the slightest bit, the way those things really are is the object of that insight. This is because that insight comprehends the way entities really exist, and because the nonexistence of the entities as things really stand is the very way that things really are. This is also because if the object of negation existed it would have to be perceived. So, just in virtue of its not being perceived, the negation of the object of refutation is taken to be perceived. **[276]**

The meaning of the statement "nonseeing is the most exalted seeing" is *not* asserted to be that to have not seen anything is to have seen. Instead, as has been previously explained, to have not seen the fabricated is to have seen free from fabrication. Therefore to have seen and not to have seen are not grounded on the same basis. The *Sañcayagāthā* says,

> Neither are physical forms not seen nor are feelings seen.
> Neither perception nor awareness are seen.
> Where awareness and consciousness are not seen,
> There, the *Tathāgata* has said, the Dharma is seen.

5. This verse does not occur in *Samādhirāja-sūtra*. It appears that Tsong khapa has taken the reference from *Prasannapadā* [89a] or from *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya [dBu ma* 'a 276b], where it is attributed to *Samādhirāja*. It is not clear what the origin of the verse is.

6. The two selves in question are the conventional self and the inherently existent self that is to be negated, not the self of the person and the self of other phenomena.

7. Although the reference here is unclear, it appears that Tsong khapa is referring to the pair of questions in the second verse, the first of which is that regarding the nature of fire.

Sentient beings express in words that the sky is seen.
Examine how the sky is seen!
The *Tathāgata* has said that the Dharma should be seen in the same way.
Seeing cannot be explained by any other example. [*Sher phyin sna Tshogs* ka 8b]

What is not seen are the five aggregates; what is seen is the Dharma, and that means the way things really are, as it has been said that whoever sees dependent arising sees the Dharma. For example, space is just the absence of obstruction to contact. To see or to perceive it is not to see the object of negation which, if it existed, would be perceptible. This is similar because in the example, what is seen is space and what is not seen are the obstacles. The last line refutes seeing the way things really are to be just like seeing blue instead of seeing it as presented in this example.

By saying that the five aggregates are not seen, it is shown that in uncontaminated meditative equipoise one does not see the characterized. And so, it is not the case that seeing the way things really are is not real seeing, but is merely so-called. But it does not follow that the ultimate exists inherently. No phenomena exist having that kind of essence. Nonetheless, their realities exist. But no phenomena whatever exist with the essence of inherent existence.

1.1.1.2 Demonstration that thereby the other three extremes are refuted

Suppose one argued as follows: although by refuting any entity having essence, you have refuted them having their *own* nature **[277]** the nature of *being other*[8] exists essentially, since you have not refuted it. Since it does, essence exists essentially.

3. Since there is no essence[9]
How can there be the nature of being other?
The essence of the nature of being other
Is what is called the nature of being other.

If heat existed as the essence of fire, then, depending on the essence of liquidity, it could be regarded as having the nature of being other. Since, upon analysis no entity exists essentially, how could the nature of being other exist

8. *Gzhan ngo*. The Sanskrit here is *parabhāva,* contrasting with *svabhāva,* or essence, the nature in virtue of which a thing is itself. In Tibetan and Sanskrit it is perfectly natural to think of these as two kinds of natures, represented by cognate terms. English has no similar term cognate with *essence*.

9. This line reads differently in the Tibetan editions of *Prasannapadā*: using *med pa* instead of *ma yin pa*: in English, "Since things are without essence."

essentially? It could not, because in the phrase "the essence of the nature of being other" that essence—that is, the entity—that exists essentially is what is called "the essentially existent nature of being other."

Now, suppose one argued as follows: Although you have refuted both its own essence—that is, entity—and the nature—or entity—of being other, things do exist essentially, because this is not refuted.

> 4. Without having either essence or the nature of being other,
> How could things exist?
> If essence or the nature of being other existed,[10]
> Entities would be established.

How could things exist without having either essence or the nature of being other? They could not, because if either essence or the nature of being other existed inherently, entities would be established as existing essentially. But both of them have been refuted earlier, so they do not.

Suppose you then argued as follows: Even though entity has been refuted, nonentity has not been refuted. Therefore, it exists essentially, and because if one exists, the opposite member of the pair exists, so entity exists as well.

> 5. Since entity does not exist,
> Nonentity does not exist.
> People say that an entity that transforms into another
> Is a nonentity.

Since entity does not exist essentially, nonentity does not exist essentially. This is because when an entity such as a pot transforms from its current state into another, it is ordinarily said that the previous entity becomes nonexistent. Here it is necessary to refute the true existence of nonentity—the object of negation—which cannot possibly be an object of knowledge. However, the point is this: since one can grasp the true existence or nonexistence of the object of negation to different degrees, if the nonentity of a disintegration of an existent object of negation is established to be not truly existent, to establish other nonentities to be not truly existent will be easier.

1.1.1.3 Condemnation of the reificationist view of the meaning of those refutations.

> 6. Those who see essence, the nature of being other
> And entities and nonentities:

10. In */rang bzhin dang ni dngos bo dag/ dnogs bo* must be read as *gzhan dngos*, as confirmed by the Sanskrit *parabhāva*; the Tibetan shortens it for meter.

They do not see the reality of
The Buddha's doctrine.

[278] So neither essence, nor the nature of being other, nor entities nor nonentities exist inherently. However, those who pretend to be interpreting the scriptures nonerronenously, who see "the essence of earth to be solidity and the essence of feeling to be the experience of the object, etc." [*Prasannapadā* 90b], as "essence" and "the nature of being other;" "consciousness, etc., which are present" [ibid.], as "entities;" and "the past of that which is present, etc." [ibid.], as "nonentities," and see all of them as existing inherently, neither see nor present the profound reality of dependent origination taught in the doctrine of the transcendent Buddha.

So the inherent existence of such things as essence is contrary to reason. The victors do not posit that essence of entities which is contrary to reason, because they nonerroneously realize the way all phenomena really are. Therefore, scholars regard only the teachings of the Victor as authentic because, since it is absolutely cogent, it is nondeceptive.

The explanations of the etymology of the Sanskrit word *āgama* [*lung*] go as follows: It is called *āgama* because it came through reliable sources who have eliminated all faults;[11] and it is called *āgama* because it brings about complete understanding; that is, it brings about understanding of the way things really are;[12] and it is called *āgama* because it leads to liberation and, by relying on it, beings depart for nirvana; therefore the teaching of the completely enlightened one is called *āgama*.[13] The teachings other than this lack absolute accuracy, and therefore they are not regarded as *āgama*.

1.1.2 Undermining inherent existence

This section has two parts: undermining it through sūtra and undermining it through reasoning.

1.1.2.1 Undermining it through sūtra

7. The Transcendent Lord, through understanding
   Entity and nonentity,

11. *Āgama* means "coming from reliable sources"; *āptebhyaḥ*, "reliable sources"; *āgatatvāt*, "having come from."

12. *Ā* means "completely"; *gamayati* means "makes one understand."

13. *Ābhimukhyād* means "facing towards," and *gamanāt* means "having gone."

In the *Discourse to Kātyāyana*
Refuted both existence and nonexistence.

Since seeing essence, the nature of being other, entity and nonentity as inherently existent is irrational, it is not the way things really are. **[279]** Therefore, the Transcendent Lord in the sūtra known as the *Discourse to Kātyāyana*, says to followers who aspire to liberation,

> Oh, Kātyāyana, Since in this world, most people are fixated on existence and nonexistence, they are unable completely to escape birth, aging, illness, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, anxiety, and conflict. . . . They are unable completely to escape the sufferings of the agony of death. [*Phran tshegs* tha 283a]

Thus he refutes the two extremes of existence and nonexistence. Since this sūtra is accepted by all schools, they, in accordance with this sūtra and the arguments previously explained, do not accept the inherent existence of the four including such things as essence. In virtue of what is the Transcendent Lord especially exalted? In virtue of his nonerroneous understanding of entity, nonentity, and essence!

1.1.2.2 Undermining it through reasoning

8. If something existed essentially,[14]
Then it could not become nonexistent.
Essence transforming into something other
Could never be tenable.

Moreover, if such things as fire existed essentially, then the essentially existing essence could not become nonexistent through transforming into something else. Just as the unobstructedness of space could never become something else, it is never tenable for that which is essentially existent to become something other. Things that have transformed, like the heat of the water, are not essences.

We can put the point this way: Anything that exists essentially cannot change into something else. So, since things are observed transforming into something else, things do not exist essentially.

9. If there is no essence,
What could transform into something else?

14. The Sanskrit uses *prakṛtyā* instead of *svabhāva*, giving a different sense: "If existence were natural." This is not reflected in the Tibetan translations, and Tsong khapa comments according to the Tibetan.

Therefore, one might say, if there were no essence, transformation into something else would make no sense; so since this is seen, entities exist essentially.

9cd. If there is essence, on the other hand,
How could it be possible for something to transform into something else?

[280] If essence did exist inherently, how could it be possible for it to transform into something else? It could not.

Buddhapālita says that the first two lines refute the transformation of entities into something else on the grounds that the thing that transforms into something else does not exist inherently and that the last two lines refute the essential existence of things on the grounds that transformation into something else of that which exists essentially is not tenable, reading all four as Nāgārjuna's own position [325b]. Here the *Commentary* says,

> The statement "Since transformation of things into something else is seen, they do not exist essentially" refers to the transformation into another that is accepted by others. But we never maintain that the transformation of anything into another exists. [92a]

This refers to the thesis that since transformation into another is seen, there is no essential existence. This is said previously in the statement, "even though such things as fire exist essentially, you perceive them transforming into another thing" [91b]. But it does not mean that we we do not accept *mere* transformation into another.

1.2 Demonstration that maintaining that things exist essentially cannot avoid the extremes

10. To say "it exists" is to reify.
To say "it does not exist" is to adopt the view of nihilism.
Therefore a wise person
Does not subscribe to "it exists" or "it does not exist."

Although there is no essential existence whatever, it is certain that whoever conceives of things as existent or as nonexistent—as the disintegration of a previous thing—will fall into absurdity: "to say 'it exists' is to reify" and "to say 'it doesn't exist' is to adopt" the view of nihilism. The views of reification and nihilism are obstacles to achieving high status and liberation. Therefore, since they are very destructive "a wise person does not subscribe to the" extremes of existence and nonexistence.

Suppose someone said, "Why, when one has a view of entity or nonentity, does that become a view of reification or nihilism?"

11. "Whatever exists essentially
Cannot be nonexistent" is reification.
"It existed before, but does not now"
Entails the error of nihilism.

Whatever is said to exist essentially, since there could be no change in its essence, could never become nonexistent. Therefore, to maintain that something exists essentially is to adopt the view of reification. **[281]** But to maintain *mere* existence is not to do so.

To maintain that a thing, having arisen essentially as an entity in the previous moment and now having subsequently disintegrated, does not exist, is to fall into the absurd view of nihilism. But, to maintain *mere* existence in the previous moment and disintegration in the second moment is not to do so.

For us, there is no view of refication or nihilism based on essence, because we do not maintain that entities exist essentially. Suppose one charged, "Although you do not adopt the view of reification, you do adopt the view of nihilism!" We would reply that if one first maintained that the object of annihilation exists essentially and then later maintained that it does not exist, one would thereby repudiate the necessity of the eternal existence of that which exists essentially, and thus would fall into nihilism. But to say that that which never existed essentially in the first place does not exist is not deprecation, and therefore is not nihilism. Compare the statement in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra:*

> O Transcendent Lord, whoever first accepts desire and confusion and then says that the entities of desire and confusion do not exist becomes a nihilist! [*mDo sde* ca 113a]

To maintain that entities exist essentially, even if one does not assert that they are permanent, would entail the view of reification. If one maintains that that which exists essentially in the previous moment is then disintegrated in the second moment, then, even though one does not assert that the continuum is broken, one adopts the view of nihilism. Therefore, as long as one maintains that things exist essentially one cannot escape the views of nihilism and reification. If one does not maintain that things exist essentially, although there is neither the view of reification nor of nihilism grounded in essence, without a ground for positing cause and effect one would repudiate them and fall into the nihilist view.

Here one should not say that just because the object of annihiliation is not accepted, one has not fallen into nihilism, just as even though it is not the case that the Cārvākas **[282]** first accept the object of annihilation—rebirth, cause, and effect, etc.—and later say that it does not exist, you cannot avoid saying that they fall into nihilism.

The Yogācāra assert that since the other-dependent—only mind and mental episodes—exists through its own characteristic, they avoid the view of ni-

hilism, and that since the imagined does not exist in the other-dependent, they avoid the view of reification. This assertion deprecates the conventional existence of subject and object with respect to the external world. It reifies the other-dependent, which does not truly exist. Therefore, they fall into both extremes! Thus, the mādhyamika's view alone does not fall into the extremes of existence and nonexistence and avoids the errors of reification and nihilism. None of the other schools achieve this. Here the *Ratnāvalī* says,

> Ask the Sāṁkhyas and Aulūkyas and the Jains
> Who say that the person is the aggregates
> Whether they maintain a view
> Free from existence and nonexistence.
>
> Therefore the nectar—the doctrine
> Of the buddhas—has been taught;
> Profound, free from existence and nonexistence.
> This Dharma should be understood as their legacy. [I: 61–62]

Thus those who assert the existence of the mere person are those of our own Buddhist schools who maintain that the person exists substantially. Those who assert the existence of the mere aggregates are those of our own schools who, while they do not assert that the person exists substantially, assert that the aggregates exist substantially. In short, unless one is able to set out cause and effect, samsara and nirvana coherently in the framework of the absence of inherently existent essence, no matter how many ways one attempts to dispel the views of reification and nihilism, one will not get free from the two extremes, because otherwise, when one eliminates nihilism one has to accept reification; and when one eliminates reification, one has to accept nihilism.

Thus, the approach of the mind-only school is to say that while material form does not exist, mind does exist; and that while the imagined nature does not exist through its own characteristic, the other two natures do exist through their own characteristic. The great compassionate teacher presented this approach, which is subject to interpretation and not definitive—like that of the *Sammitīya* who assert the existence of the person—as a method to lead them to an understanding of the ultimate truth. One should follow the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* and the *Akṣayamati-nirdeśa-sūtra* in order to understand which scriptures are definitive and which are require interpretation. One can learn this from *The Essence of Eloquence* (Thurman 1985, Geshe Yeshes Thab-khas 2000), where it is explained extensively.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to to show that the demonstration that all entities are

inherently essenceless can also be corroborated by profound scriptures and to demonstrate that all of the scriptures that present this are explained by this chapter. The *Samādhirāja-sūtra*[15] says,

> Because everything is inconceivable and everything is unarisen
> The conception of entity and nonentity is destroyed.
> Those fools who are overpowered by mind
> Suffer for a billion lifetimes. [*Upālipariprcchā-sūtra dKon brtsegs* ca 128b]

And further, it is said,

> In the inconceivably distant past
> I remember that I was a supreme human being:
> The great sage who served as a vessel
> Who was named after naturelessness.
>
> Immediately after birth I floated in space,
> I taught that all things were natureless.
> That is why I received that name.
> Word of this spread to the entire world.
>
> All of the gods proclaimed that
> I would be the victor called "natureless."
> Immediately after birth, I took seven steps.
> The victors declared that all phenomena are natureless.
>
> When the sage explains all phenomena,
> When the Buddha becomes a Dharma king,
> From the trees, bushes, grasses and mountains
> The word spread that all phenomena are natureless.
>
> The Guide to the world
> Proclaimed the following words:
> All of the words that exist in this world
> Are natureless, and nothing exists. [*Samādhirāja-sūtra, mDo sde* da, 23b]

To be natureless here means to be essenceless.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

One should ascertain the explicit meaning of this presentation—that nature and naturelessness in general, one's *own* nature and the nature of being *other*

15. The verse cited immediately following is actually from the *Upālipariprcchā-sūtra,* and is misattributed. The subsequent quotation is from the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*.

in particular—and the essence of phenomena as they really exist cannot be posited in the framework of inherent existence. One should thereby ascertain the implicit meaning—dependent origination—with the understanding that they are all only tenable when they are merely posited conventionally.

This is the commentary on the fifteenth chapter, having eleven verses, called “the examination of essence.”

CHAPTER XVI

Examination of Bondage

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of samsara and nirvana
    1.1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of cyclic existence
      1.1.1.1 Refutation of the thesis that the appropriated aggregates cycle
        1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of the thesis that that which is permanent cycles
        1.1.1.1.2 Refutation of the thesis that that which is impermanent cycles
      1.1.1.2 Refutation of the thesis that the appropriating sentient being cycles
        1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of the thesis that the sentient being who is different from the aggregates cycles
        1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of the thesis that the inexpressible person, whether they are identical to or different from the aggregates, cycles
    1.1.2 Refutation of the essential existence of nirvana
  1.2 Refutation of the essential existence of bondage and liberation
    1.2.1 Collective refutation of the essential existence of liberation and bondage
    1.2.2 Refutation of each of liberation and bondage
      1.2.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of bondage
      1.2.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of liberation
  1.3 Dispelling the apparent consequence that there is no point in making effort to achieve liberation
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the second part of the section on the two selflessnesses, the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. We are still in the second of its two sections: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of things. We have completed the first two parts of the three parts of that section: the refutation of contact and the refutation of the essential existence of appropriation of causes and conditions. **[284:12]** The third part of this section, the refutation of the essential existence of bondage, has two sections: the main point and the refutation of the argument. This chapter comprises the first part. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

This section has three parts: the refutation of the essential existence of samsara and nirvana, the refutation of the essential existence of bondage and liberation, and dispelling the apparent consequence that there is no point in making effort to achieve liberation.

1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of samsara and nirvana

This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of cyclic existence and refutation of the essential existence of nirvana.

1.1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of cyclic existence

Here someone might say that things *do* exist essentially because *cyclic existence* exists essentially. Since cyclic existence is said to be the transmigration from one life to another[1] if things did not exist essentially, **[285]** who would it be who goes from an earlier life to a later life and thus cycles through existence? It would be like the son of a barren woman.

The refutation of this has two parts: the refutation of the thesis that the appropriated aggregates cycle and refutation of the thesis that the appropriating sentient being cycles.

1. Tsong khapa uses *'gro ba* to mean both *transmigration* and *life*. In this context *life* must be understood as indicating any kind of birth in any of the six realms.

1.1.1.1 Refutation of the thesis that the appropriated aggregates cycle

This section has two parts: the refutation of the thesis that that which is permanent cycles and the refutation of the thesis that that which is impermanent cycles.

1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of the thesis that that which is permanent cycles

> 1. Suppose compounded phenomena cycle:
> If they are permanent, they do not cycle.

Suppose that one said, "Since cyclic existence exists essentially, either the sentient being or the the aggregates must cycle. Thus, the compounded, *viz*., the aggregates, cycle." In that case, they must be either permanent or impermanent. If they were permanent, they would not cycle, because they would lack the activity of going and coming, and if they came from the previous life and did not go to the next life, this would contradict their being transmigrators.

1.1.1.1.2 Refutation of the thesis that that which is impermanent cycles

> 1c. Even if they are impermanent, they do not cycle.

Suppose one said that impermanent compounded phenomena cycle. Even if they were impermanent, they could not inherently be the transmigrator, because an impermanent thing ceases immediately after arising and disintegrated things cannot cycle once again.

However, one might think that the *impermanent* compounded phenomena, linked one to another as cause and effect in an uninterrupted continuum, cycle. To this we reply as follows: Without differentiating between earlier and later moments, the continuum comprising successive moments could cycle, or the individual moments could each cycle. The refutation of the latter of the two—the refutation that each successive moment does—is as follows: The effect at the later moment, which is yet to be arisen, cannot be the transmigrator, because that has neither come from any of the previous lives nor is it going to go to any future life; and these two actions are necessary for something to be a transmigrator. Nor can the previous cause, which has disintegrated, cycle, because that has neither come from any of the previous lives nor is it

going to go to any future life. Apart from the previously disintegrated compound phenomena and the future ones which have yet to arise, there are no other compound phenomena, whether past or future; [286] and these two, as well—disintegration and being yet to arise—cannot be the transmigrator. Therefore compound phenomena, whether in the past or the future, cannot be the transmigrator.

Suppose, on the other hand, one thought that although these *two* cannot cycle, when the later moment is arisen, the earlier moment has cycled. Thus, depending on both the earlier and later stages, a compounded phenomenon can be said to cycle. One must inquire: Are the earlier and later moments essentially identical or essentially different from one another? The first alternative does not make sense because they are cause and effect, because they are sequential, and because the disintegration of the earlier and the arising of the later occur at distinct moments.

If, on the other hand, we consider the second alternative, when the later moment has arisen it does not make any sense for the previous moment to have cycled because these two would be inherently different. There is no fallacy of accident here. Otherwise, it would follow from ordinary beings having been born in cyclic existence that arhats would also be in cyclic existence; and it would follow from one butterlamp burning that another that has already been extinguished would nonetheless also be burning. Since these are equally unrelated objects, if when one of two moments arises, the other cycles, there would be no justification for saying that this case is different from these two examples.

Moreover, if the later moment arises from the earlier moment, does it arise from one that is already disintegrated, one that is not yet, or from one that is disintegrating? Suppose it arises from a disintegrated one: It would follow that a sprout could arise from a roasted seed! Such a thing would be causeless! According to this system *disintegration*[2] is considered a thing. However, as has already been explained, a later moment is *not* considered to have arisen from the *disintegrated earlier moment*. Thus this is how it is refuted.

Suppose, on the other hand, that it arises from a previous moment that is not already disintegrated. It would follow that fruit would arise from a seed that had not changed at all, and cause and effect would be simultaneous. Conventionally, an earlier nondisintegrated one is considered to be the direct cause of a later thing. However, in this case, since arising through its own characteristic is being refuted, all of the previously explained errors ensue.

Suppose, finally, that it arises from one that is disintegrating. There is no

2. In this discussion it is important to rememberthat *zhig pa* (*disintegration*) refers to the state of being disintegrated, not to the *process of disintegration*. See note 24 and page 207 above.

disintegrating that is neither [287] already disintegrated nor yet to be disintegrated. The errors attaching to these two have already been presented.

Thus the assertion that sequential moments either jointly or severally constitute the transmigrator has been refuted. The identity and difference of the sequential moments and the inherent existence of the arising of the subsequent moment from the previous moment have been refuted. Therefore, since one cannot posit them as inherently existent as sequential or as cause and effect, the continuum that would depend on them does not exist as well, and therefore cyclic existence does not exist inherently as that continuum.

All of the non-Buddhist schools who maintain that the transmigrator persists from one life to another maintain that a substantially existent person inherently different from the aggregates cycles. Therefore, it is our own schools who maintain that compounded phenomena or the aggregates cycle, and therefore most of them maintain that the basis of positing the person is consciousness. Therefore, it is maintained that a consciousness, such as the foundation consciousness, cycles. The cycling of *that* is called the cycling of the *person* as well, and the continuum, without distinguishing the sequential moments, is maintained to be cyclic existence.

1.1.1.2 Refutation of the thesis that the appropriating sentient being cycles

This section has two parts: the refutation of the thesis that the sentient being who is different from the aggregates cycles and the refutation of thesis that the inexpressible person, whether it is identical to or different from the aggregates, cycles.

1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of the thesis that the sentient being who is different from the aggregates cycles

Suppose one said, "Although you are correct that it is contradictory to reason that compounded phenomena do not cycle, the substantially existent self, which is different from the aggregates, cycles."

> 1d. The same approach applies to sentient beings.

Since all of these approaches to demonstrating the untenablity of the thesis that uncompounded phenomena cycle also apply to a transmigrating sentient being characterized in that way, that proposal does not make sense either. This is because, since it would be permanent, it would not perform the activities of

coming and going, and so as permanent it would not cycle. And analysis to determine whether an impermanent sentient being is momentary or continuous shows that it is untenable for it to cycle.

1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of the thesis that the inexpressible person, whether it is identical to or different from the aggregates, cycles

At this point, the Sammitīya might argue as follows: It does not makes sense to apply this analysis showing the untenability of permament or impermanent compounded phenomena transmigrating **[288]** to sentient beings *per se* because the self—whether it is identical to, or different from, the aggregates—is inexpressible. Thus, the inexpressible person—whether it is permanent or impermanent—cycles.

> 2. Suppose the person cycles:
> Since when sought in the fivefold way
> In the aggregates, in the sense spheres, and in the elements,
> It is not there, what cycles?

If this person who cycles exists inherently, this person, as was explained before, should be found when sought through the fivefold analysis—that is, an inquiry into whether it is identical to, different from, or bears some other relation to the aggregates, faculties, and elements. Therefore, since it is not found, how could an inherently existent self cycle? It could not!

> 3. If one transmigrated from
> Appropriation to appropriation, there would be no life.
> If there were neither life nor appropriator,
> What would transmigrate?

Moreover, here, when one transmigrates from appropriating a human life to appropriating a god's life, does the transmigration exist essentially in virtue of giving up the human life or not? In the first case, in between the earlier and later lives, there would not be any life—any set of five aggregates—to appropriate, because there is a time when one has given up the previous aggregates and has not yet appropriated the later ones. This is because if it existed essentially it would not be possible for the two actions—giving up the previous and taking up the next—to occur simultaneously. Since there would be neither life nor aggregates to appropriate in between these two, there would be no grounds for calling it a self. So what would this person be? It would not be anything! Since it would not exist, the future person who appropriates the life of the god would not exist. So, since there is no life into which to cycle, to which life would he cycle?

Alternatively, this could be read: Since there is no appropriator, what action of transmigration does it perform? In this case, the "what would" modifies the verb "transmigration."[3]

The second case, on the other hand, does not make any sense, because the next life would be taken up without having given up the previous life. The single self would have to be both a man's and a god's, but that cannot be maintained. Suppose somone said that between the two lives—that of man and that of the god—there is a god's intermediate life.[4] Therefore, there would not be a self without a life. **[289]** One cannot say this, either, because the earlier analysis in terms of whether or not one transmigrates having given up the previous life applies equally to transmigration from the man's life to the god's intermediate life.

Suppose one then said that the giving up of the man's life and the taking up of the god's life are simultaneous. Therefore, since the giving up of the previous and the taking up of the next lives are simultaneous, we do not commit the error of saying that there would be a self without appropriation in between them. Let us analyze this as follows: One part of the self would have to give up the previous appropriation while the other part enters into the intermediate life. Or, on the other hand, if it were not so divided, the whole self would give up the previous life and take up the next one. In the first case, there would have to be two selves: one of which gives up the man's life, and one of which takes up the god's intermediate life. In the second case, there would be one self with no life in between two lives.

Here is the only difference between this example and the previous one: When entering the intermediate state, since it is so close, there is not supposed to be enough time to appropriate. Here, the reason why the opponent must accept a self without aggregates in between the previous and the next lives is that, having said "that one is given up, and this one is taken up," the two activities—giving up and taking up—which depend on karma, are based on the two objects—the two consecutive sets of aggregates. Therefore, the activities called "giving up" and "taking up" which must be dependent upon the agent cannot be performed with respect to a single object simultaneously, because if they were simultaneous, the man's aggregates and the intermediate aggregates, which are the bases of the actions, would have to be simultaneous. This is because, if they were essentially existent, the dependent and that on which it depends would have always to be inextricable. And so, since the two activities of giving up and taking up are sequential, the previous life given up

3. The Sanskrit in XVI: 3d reads *kim saṁsariṣyati*. This is ambiguous between *What would transmigrate?* and *What would transmigration be?* Here Tsong khapa is explaining Candrakīrti's gloss on the second reading, following his explanation of the gloss on the first reading [96a]. The Tibetan editions, like our English, reflects the first reading, but not the second.

4. That is, the life of the being in the bardo would be a god's bardo life.

and the next life taken up would be sequential as well. [290] Therefore, after having given up the previous life, at the time when one has not not yet taken up the next one, there would have to be a self without a life.

1.1.2 Refutation of the essential existence of nirvana

Suppose one said, "Cyclic existence exists essentially, because its opposite, nirvana, exists essentially."

4. It is not tenable in any way
For compounded phenomena to pass into nirvana.
It is not tenable in any way
For a sentient being to pass into nirvana.[5]

Whatever passes into nirvana must be one of two things. And it is not tenable in any way—that is, at all—for the passing into nirvana of compounded phenomena—that is, the aggregates—to exist essentially. Nor is it tenable in any way for a sentient being—that is, a person, whether they are said to be substantially different from aggregates or inexpressible in terms of identity to or difference from the aggregates—to pass into nirvana. These arguments can be rearranged as follows: "If they are permanent, they would not pass into nirvana," etc.[6]

Unless the existence of the agent of transmigration—either the person or the aggregates—is not refuted, the existence of transmigration in cyclic existence cannot be refuted. When the existence of the transmigrator is refuted, the existence of the one who passes into or achieves nirvana is refuted as well. Therefore, the true existence of the achievement by the achievers of what is to be achieved is refuted. Therefore, the true existence of that which is to be achieved is refuted. Thereby, the true existence of nirvana itself, or the dharmakaya[7] is necessarily refuted, because the category—things to be achieved that are truly existent in virtue of the true existence of their achievers, etc.—has been refuted.

Even the reificationist Indian Buddhist schools, because they understand how these arguments go, do not distinguish between cyclic existence and nirvana on the grounds that one is truly existent and the other is not. However,

5. While the Tibetan *mya ngan 'da' bar* is a verbal construction, the Sanskrit *saṁskārāṇām nirvāṇam* is a nominal construction and would read "The nirvana of compounded phenomena/Is not tenable in any way," and *mutatis mutandis* with respect to the third and fourth lines.

6. See XVI: 1b.

7. The "truth-body," one of the three bodies of a Buddha, understood as the manifestation of the Buddha as reality or truth.

people of this land, who do not understand how these arguments go, draw this distinction.

With the intent of showing that nirvana also does not exist inherently, it is said in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* that **[291]**

> Worthy Subhuti, nirvana is also like an illusion or a dream; Worthy Subhuti, all of the qualities of the buddha are also like an illusion or like a dream . . . Oh son of good lineage, even if there were a phenomenon greater than nirvana, I would say that it is also like a dream and like an illusion. [*Sher phyin* ka 23a–23b]

And the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says

> The ultimate truth is like a dream;
> And nirvana is similarly like a dream.
> The wise take them that way
> And this is the supreme discipline of mind. [*mDo sde* da 161b]

and

> When the bodhisattva addresses these things:
> The truth of cessation is like a dream;
> Nirvana also is essentially a dream;
> That is called the discipline of speech. [*mDo sde* da 159a]

It is said that this is the supreme discipline. Here is what this means: When the meaning of essencelessness is contemplated, this is mental discipline; when it is spoken about, this is the supreme discipline of speech. The discipline is that which subdues that which is to be abandoned and thereby eradicates all of the errors.

1.2 Refutation of the essential existence of bondage and liberation

The section has two parts: the collective refutation of the essential existence of liberation and bondage and the refutation of each.

1.2.1 Collective refutation of the essential existence of liberation and bondage

Someone might say, "Although you have refuted cyclic existence and nirvana, since liberation and bondage exist essentially, entities exist essentially."

5. Compounded phenomena that arise and cease
Are neither bound nor liberated.
And in the same way, sentient beings
Are neither bound nor liberated.

It is said that the afflictions—such as desire—render the bound one heteronomous and thus constitute bondage and that ordinary beings, thus bound, cannot escape the three realms. It is easy to see that it is unreasonable to say that those things thought of as the bonds of the bound, such as desire, are permanent. Thus, momentary compounded phenomena which arise and cease are not bound; that is, bondage does not exist inherently, since as we have seen earlier, it is untenable for it to be either continous or momentary. **[292]** Their liberation also does not exist inherently as per the earlier arguments.

As we explained earlier, the bondage and liberation of compounded phenomena are untenable. "And in the same way" means that sentient beings also are neither bound nor liberated. Alternatively, "and in the same way" can refer to the earlier explanation that neither permanent nor impermanent beings transmigrate or liberate.[8]

1.2.2 Refutation of each of liberation and bondage

This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of bondage and the refutation of the essential existence of liberation.

1.2.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of bondage

Suppose someone said: Although compounded phenomena and sentient beings being bound or liberated have been refuted, since bondage—appropriation, such as desire—exists, the bound one exists essentially.[9]

6. If appropriation were bondage,
Then the appropriator would not be bound.
But without appropriation, there is no bondage.
So, in what circumstances would one be bound?

If appropriation existed inherently as bondage you cannot escape two alternatives: On the one hand, that which has the appropriation—which is bondage by such things as desire—might "not be bound," that is, might lack es-

8. The first explanation follows *Prasannapadā* at [97b] and the second reflects the *Buddhapālita* at [229a].

9. Desire, here, must be understood both as a bond—that which binds one to cyclic existence—and, since it is an agentival mental process, as an appropriator.

sential bondage, because if it had it, it would need another bond—another object—but there would be no point in another bond. If the bond and the bound existed essentially, the two verbs—"bound" in "this is bound" and the verb "binds" in "this binds"—would have to refer to substantially different actions. Therefore, that which is already bound would have to be bound once again. This is demonstrated by the similar argument in the eighth chapter.

But without appropriation there is no bondage, because it would be free from bondage like the Tathāgata. In that case, in what circumstances would one be bound? There are none.

> 7. If bondage existed at all prior to that which is to be bound,
> It would have to bind the bound,
> But it could not. The rest has been explained
> By where one has gone, where one has not yet gone, and where one goes.

Moreover, just like such things as a chain, the previously existing bond binds the bound. If prior to that which is to be bound, the bond—such as desire—existed, then, though it must bind the compounded phenomena or the person to be bound, they would not be there. This is because in the absence of a basis, such things as desire would not be present. And if the bond existed earlier, **[293]** then it does not need any connection to the bound later. If there were a bound that existed as inherently different from the bond, there would be no need for an additional binding. All of the other refutations relevant to this case have been presented in the refutation of where one has gone, where one has not gone, and where one goes, and can be applied here by rearranging the text as follows: That which has been bound is not bound.[10]

1.2.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of liberation

Suppose someone said, "Although you have refuted bondage, since liberation exists, and without someone bound, there would be nobody to liberate. Therefore bondage exists."

> 8. Whoever is bound would not get liberated.
> Whoever is not bound would not get liberated.
> If a bound one were being liberated,
> Bondage and liberation would occur simultaneously.

If liberation existed essentially, where would it be? Whoever is bound would not get liberated, that is, would be essentially unliberated because of being bound. Suppose one then said, "Since one who was previously bound

10. See II:1.

later achieves liberation by means of meditation on the path, that bound one must be essentially liberated." That would be merely to say that although the bound one is not yet liberated, he would become liberated. But suppose one thought that that which is bound at an earlier time soon becomes liberated in the future, which is imminent, and that thus this is put that way. If liberation existed inherently, then something *could* be proximate to it. But the liberation of those who maintain that it does not exist inherently in virtue of having refuted the bound is *not* proximal to the inherently existent present.

Not only that, but a person who was not bound by the afflictions would not attain an inherently existent liberation because he would already be liberated. Why would there be a need for a further liberation? If further liberation were needed, the arhat who is already liberated would have bondage and so would be bound.

"How," one might ask, "does this argument go?" The one who is liberated and liberation must both be regarded as having transcended cyclic existence. If these two existed through their own characteristic, then it would follow that they could not both be accomplished by a single action, and each would need its own action. **[294]** But in that case, it would not be tenable to say that the liberated one achieved liberation, because there is no second action other than the action in virtue of performing which the liberated one is so-called. If there were a second action, then the arhat would need further liberation, since his being an arhat would depend on further liberation, despite being already liberated.

Suppose one now thought, "Since the one who is *not* bound is not liberated, the one who *is* bound is liberated." If the bound one's being liberated existed inherently, then, since there is a common basis of being the bound one and being liberated, it is impossible for bondage and liberation to occur there simultaneously, just like darkness and light. This is just like the previous explanation that if arising existed inherently, then that which is to be arisen would have to be co-present with its conditions.

1.3 Dispelling the apparent consequence that there is no point in making effort to achieve liberation

Suppose one argued as follows: If neither cyclic existence nor nirvana nor bondage nor liberation exist inherently, it would be pointless for those who aspire to nirvana to think this way: "When, without appropriation, will I attain nirvana, and when will that nirvana be mine?" It would also be pointless for them to engage in all of the practices necessary for attaining liberation, such as generosity, propriety, listening, contemplating, and meditating.

9. "I, without appropriation, will attain nirvana,
And nirvana will be mine," one says.
Whoever grasps like this
Grasps mightily to appropriation.

Although all phenomena are, like a reflection, essenceless, and the self and *being mine* are empty of inherent existence, some develop the view according to which the self and *being mine* exist essentially, and they say, "I, without appropriating a further life, will attain nirvana and that nirvana will be mine." Those who aspire in this way to nirvana grasp it. Their grasping is a mighty view fixated on appropriation—that is, on the transitory assemblage. Until one abandons that gasping, all efforts exerted towards liberation will be pointless. Not all conceptions focused on nirvana are views objectifying the transitory assemblages. **[295]** But when it is grasped through the thought, "When will I, who exist inherently, attain nirvana, and when will that nirvana be inherently mine in the same sense?"[11] this is the view of the transitory aggregates. *That* is explained to be the obstacle to attaining nirvana. Thus, as it said, in order to be liberated from samsara, one must abandon it. Therefore, this shows that both the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have the realization of the essencelessness of the person and of phenomena.

10. When one can bring about neither nirvana,
Nor the elimination of cyclic existence,
What are the cyclic existence
And the nirvana one imagines?

Therefore, those who aspire to nirvana should give up all of the things mentioned earlier. This is because for them, ultimately there is no way to bring about, that is, to fabricate nirvana, nor is there any way to eliminate that is, to extinguish cyclic existence. What is that inherently existent cyclic existence that they imagine to be extinguished and what is that inherently existent nirvana that they imagine to be achieved?

There is an alternative reading:[12] Since neither cyclic existence nor nirvana is seen to exist inherently, it is not possible for any sentient being to detach from or to depart from cyclic existence or to make effort to bring about nirvana. In that case what could you imagine nirvana to be? Imagining it would not make sense! By realizing this, and by not thinking in *that way,* one will definitely depart the wilderness of cyclic existence and arrive at the city of nirvana.

11. The two views objectifying the transitory assemblage are that objectifying one's own self and that objectifying *being mine*, or *belonging to the self*; these views attaching inherent existence to both the self and the possession relation here.

12. These alternative readings are both provided both by Buddhapālita [231a] and by Candrakīrti [100a].

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to to show that the presentation through arguments of samsara and nirvana, and bondage and liberation, as essenceless can also be corroborated by profound scriptures, and to demonstrate that all of the sūtras that state that material form is neither bound nor liberated are explained by this chapter. The *Māradamana-sūtra*[13] says:

> Then the youthful Mañjuśrī reflected on the form of an evil demon, **[296]** being bound by the bonds of the threshold,[14] falling on the ground, lamenting "I am tightly bound! I am bound! I am tightly bound! I am bound!"
>
> Mañjuśrī said, "O demon, that by which you are always bound is not a primordial bond. There is a tighter bond apart from those bonds.[15] What is that? It is like this: ego, the bonds of error, greed, the bonds of views. Oh demon, these are the bonds; there are no bonds tighter than these bonds! You are always bound by these, but you are not primordially bound. [*mDo sde* ka 253a]

It continues,

> O demon! Would you be happy to be released?
>
> He replied, "I would be happy."
>
> One of the sons of the gods, Suyāma,[16] said to Mañjuśrī: O, Mañjuśrī, release this evil demon, to return to his own place!
>
> Thereafter, Mañjuśrī, asked the evil demon: O, demon! Who is to be released and what binds him?
>
> He replied: O, Mañjuśrī, I know what binds me!
>
> He replied: O, demon! You regard yourselves as bound, even though you are not bound. In the same way, all ordinary beings regard the impermanent as permanent, suffering as happiness, the selfless as having a self, the impure as pure, and the formless as form. They regard that which is without feeling; that which is with-

13. This sūtra also has another name, *Ārya-Mañjuśrī-vikurvaṇaparivarta-nāma-māhāyana-sūtra*. This is proffered in the colophon [257b].

14. This is how the Tibetan version of *Prasannapadā* reads as well. [100a] However, the Sanskrit version reads *Indrakīla, bound to Indra's stake*. [129] Neither the threshold nor the stake are mentioned in the sūtra text.

15. The sūtra text here reads, "Oh, demon, there are bonds tighter than these bonds, by which you are always bound, but you do not realize them." The Sanskrit edition of *Prasannapadā* reads "Oh demon, there are bonds tighter than these bonds by which you are always bound, which will bind you again." Tsong khapa's text follows the Tibetan edition of *Prasannapadā* [100a].

16. The śūtra text gives a different name for the son of the god *bTsham btsham* instead of *Rab mtha' bral*. The other three texts accord with Tsong khapa.

> out perception, that which is without disposition, that which is without consciousness as having feeling, as having perception, as having dispositions, and as having conciousness, respectively. [253a–253b] **[297]**

It continues,

> O demon! When you are freed, from what would you be freed?
>
> He replied: There is nothing from which I would be freed!
>
> Mañjuśrī replied: O demon! in the same way, those who are to be freed also would not be freed from anything unless they completely realize the imperfection of perception. When one completely realizes that, one is said to be freed. [253b][17]

This sūtra shows that one should understand that just as fire is extinguished by water in a dream, freedom should be understood as the mere cutting off of the vines of erroneous conception.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

Realizing that if cycling in cyclic existence, achieving nirvana, being bound by afflictions, and being freed by cutting those bonds existed inherently, none of them would be tenable and they make no sense in the context of inherent existence, one should ascertain the profound dependent origination—that they are all completely tenable when they are merely posited through the force of nominal conventions.

This is the commentary on the sixteenth chapter, having ten verses, called "the examination of bondage and freedom."

17. The version quoted in this text has other slight differences from that quoted in the Tibetan edition of *Prasannapadā;* [100a–100b] each in turn is slightly different from that found in the Sanskrit edition of *Prasannapadā;* [129–130]; and each of *these* is slightly different from that found in the sDe dge edition of the sūtra. There are minor lexical differences between these that we have not noted, but these do not amount to any difference in meaning.

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CHAPTER XVII

Examination of Action

Chapter Outline

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      1.1.1.1 Setting out the virtuous and nonvirtuous attitudes
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1.2.3 Demonstrating by examples that, because of essencelessness, things can perform functions
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the second part of the section on the two selflessnesses, the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. We are still in the second of its two sections: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of things. We have completed the first two parts of the three parts of that section: the refutation of contact and the refutation of the appropriation of causes and conditions as essentially existent. We are still in the third part of this section, the refutation of the essential existence of bondage. We have completed the first of its two sections: the main point. **[297:14]** This chapter comprises the second part: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of liberation and bondage. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

This section has two parts: the argument and the reply.

1.1. The argument

The statement that cyclic existence exists essentially was advanced as a premise for the claim that things exist essentially. In response to the earlier refutation of this assertion, someone might argue as follows: Cyclic existence exists essentially because it is the basis of the relation between actions and their effects. If the essentially existent compounded phenomena or the sentient being transmigrates continuously from one birth and death to another, actions and effects must be related to one another **[298]**, since actions performed in this life come to fruition in other lives. If there were not such cyclic existence, actions and their effects would be completely unrelated, since consciousness ceases immediately after it arises, and at the time when the karma is projected, the effect has not yet occurred. Thus, since it is the basis of the relation between actions and their effects, cyclic existence must exist essentially. What are actions and their effects?

There are two parts to this discussion: setting out virtuous and nonvirtuous deeds and the method of dispelling nihilism and reification with respect to them.

1.1.1 Setting out virtuous and nonvirtuous deeds

This section has two parts: setting out virtuous and nonvirtuous attitudes and setting out the different kinds of divisions of actions.

1.1.1.1 Setting out virtuous and nonvirtuous attitudes

> 1. Self-restraint and benefitting others
> With lovingkindness is the Dharma.
> This is the seed for
> Fruits in this and future lives.

The self is that with respect to which the ego is posited; that is, the person which is imputed in dependence on the aggregates. That which prevents the person from engaging in such acts as killing, induced through the power of

such attitudes as attachment with proper restraint[1] and that which collects[2] and regulates the ripening of the fruits of karma is mind. And that which holds the person back from falling into lower realms is Dharma.[3] That is not all that it means: It also includes "benefitting others with loving kindness," including the four grounds of attraction—that is, generosity, gentle speech, beneficence, and integrity[4]—and saving others from such things as fear. The loving kindness one develops towards those who are near and dear or towards oneself is also Dharma.

The scriptures give three meanings of the word "Dharma": the holding *(dhārayati)* of their own characteristics by all of the contaminated and uncontaminated phenomena *(dharmas)* holding the person back from falling into lower realms through the ten virtuous actions,[5] and holding the person back from transmigrating in the five transmigrations—cyclic existence—through nirvana, as expressed in "I take refuge in the Dharma." **[299]** It should be understood that the opposites of these three are being unrestrained that is, engaging in such activities as killing, harming others, or antipathy towards others are non-Dharma *(adharma)*.

Just as a rice seed is the specific cause of a rice sprout and such things as the soil are the common causes of sprouts, these three kinds of attitudes are the seeds of pleasant ripened effects, because such things as the person's effort are only the common causes. When would those effects arise? In the life we see, and in those other lives we do not see! The nonvirtues should be understood in the same way.

1.1.1.2 Setting out the different kinds of divisions of actions

This section has two parts: the brief presentation and the detailed explanation.

1.1.1.2.1 Brief presentation

> 2. The Unsurpassed Sage has said
> That actions are either intention or intentional.

1. Tsong khapa is glossing *legs par sdom pa*, and in particular the *legs pa*, which we have buried in the word *self-restraint*.

2. Tsong khapa, following Candrakīrti, is presenting a Sanskrit etymology of *citta* (mind) from *cita* (to collect).

3. *Dharma* in Sanskrit literally means *that which holds*.

4. These four grounds are the four conditions that make a teacher attractive to students and so make possible the propagation of Dharma.

5. *Dharma* can also mean *virtue*.

The varieties of these actions
Have been delineated in many ways.

Through realization of the ultimate truth, the Unsurpassed Sage, who is superior to the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas, has said that there are two kinds of action: intentions and intentional actions. Many varieties of these two kinds of actions are delineated—that is, explained.

1.1.1.2.2 Detailed presentation

This section has two parts: the three varieties of the two kinds of actions and the seven divisions of the three varieties of actions.

1.1.1.2.2.1 The three varieties of the two kinds of actions

3. Of these, what is called "intention"
Is maintained to be mental.
What is called "intentional"
Comprises the physical and the verbal.

Of the two kinds of action mentioned earlier, that which is called "intention" is precisely the intention concomitant with mental consciousness. This is because intention is maintained to be mental; that is, it pertains to the mind and is accomplished by the mind and it does not depend on engaging in physical or verbal action. That which is called "intentional action" should be seen as physical and verbal, because it is done intentionally, with the intention to engage in physical and verbal action. These are also maintained to be physical and verbal because they pertain to the body and speech **[300]** and are accomplished by means of these two.

1.1.1.2.2.2 The seven divisions of the three varieties of actions

4. Speech and physical action:
Unobservable unrejected actions, and
Unobservable rejected actions;
As well as . . .

5. Virtuous and nonvirtuous actions
Derived from enjoyment;
As well as intention: All are maintained to be similar.
These seven phenomena are the kinds of action.

Virtuous and nonvirtuous speech—that is, clear verbal expression—and virtuous and nonvirtuous physical action are the two kinds of observables. In the same way, that which is other than the observable—that is, the unobservable—is also maintained to be of two kinds: the virtuous and the nonvirtuous. When the sangha and others enjoy the things that have been completely relinquished to them, then the merit—the virtue—develops in the continuum of the benefactor. Just as that virtue arises, when a temple is built in which animals are sacrificed, when people enjoy the temple where such things as sacrifices are held, thereby the demerit—the vice—develops in their continua. Mental action—intention—initiates virtuous and nonvirtuous action. These seven phenomena are maintained to be actions.

The nonvirtuous unobservable is the unobservable subtle substance of nonrejection.[6] That is, when one resolves, "From now on, I will earn my living by killing sentient beings, or by robbery," or when one adopts a profession such as that of a fisherman or a trapper, from the moment one engages in such activities as trapping, even when one is not actively engaging in these activities, a nonobservable nonvirtuous substance continuously arises in one's continuum. The *Abhidharmakośa* says,

> Ill-discipline is developed
> Through action or resolution. [IV: 37ab]

The first of the two ways of developing ill-discipline is through engaging in the action of killing, like someone of a caste such as that of a fisherman. The second way is by someone not borne into those castes resolving to earn one's living in that same way, as it is explained in the autocommentary [*mNgon pa* khu 168b]. And this how the unobservable ill-discipline develops, but not how mere unobservable vice develops.

[301] The virtuous unobservable is the unobservable subtle substance of rejection. That is, one says, "From now onward, I reject such activities as killing." From the moment one completes those observable physical and verbal actions, later on, even when one is drunk or in some similar state, the virtuous unobservable continues to arise. This is also the way unobservable substances develop in the context of discipline and some morally neutral actions. But it is not the way all virtuous unobservables develop.

Although these unobservables have the nature of both material form and action, they are unobservable, because unlike the observables, the intention cannot be observed by others.

6. According to the *Abhidharmakośa,* there is a kind of nonphysical substance (*gzugs*) corresponding to restraint or lack of restraint that can be virtuous or nonvirtuous, and this actually becomes a part of the assemblage of aggregates.

1.1.2 The method of dispelling nihilism and reification with respect to virtuous and nonvirtuous deeds

This section has two parts: presenting the opponent's argument and how to refute it.

1.1.2.1 Presenting the opponent's argument

> 6. If until the time of ripening
> Action had to endure, it would be permanent.
> If it has ceased, then having ceased,
> How will a fruit arise?

Here some argue that if those actions—many kinds of which have been explained earlier—endure without cessation until the time ripening, they would be permanent, because they would have to be free of cessation until then; and since those that do not cease earlier also do not cease later, they would therefore be uncompounded, and uncompounded phenomena do not induce ripening. If actions ceased immediately after they arose, how could they give rise to effects? They could not, because that which has ceased does not exist any more.

1.1.2.2 How to refute it

This section has two parts: dispelling reification and nihilism through asserting that there is a continuum and dispelling reification and nihilism through asserting that karma is indestructible.

1.1.2.2.1 Dispelling reification and nihilism through asserting that there is a continuum

This section has two parts: the principal mode of refuting reification and nihilism and identifying the ten paths of action with their respective effects.

1.1.2.2.1.1 The principal mode of refuting reification and nihilism

This section has two parts: presenting the example and applying the analogy.

1.1.2.2.1.1.1 Presenting the example

7. Any continuum, such as that of a sprout,
Comes from a seed.
From that arises the fruit. Without a seed,
It would not come into being either.

8. Since from the seed comes the continuum,
And from the continuum comes the fruit,
The seed precedes the fruit.
Therefore there is neither nonexistence nor permanence.

The first of the opponent's two analyses is not acceptable. The second analysis *is* acceptable, but the alleged erroneous consequences do not follow. Although the seed is momentary, the sprout and all that is indicated by "such as," including such things as the plant, the stem, and the leaves—the continuum of effects—arises subsequently from the seed. **[302]** That is, the seed ceases after having caused them. Subsequently, from that continuum of effects, a vast array of effects arises. Without the seed preceding them, the continuum of such things as the sprout would not have arisen. Because the continuum of the sprout arises from the seed, and the subsequent effects arise from that continuum, and because the seed precedes the fruit, there is no termination, no non-arising of the continuum of effects; and there is no permanence, no endurance of the seed without cessation until the effect arises.

1.1.2.2.1.1.2 Applying the analogy

9. So a mental continuum arises
From a preceding intention.
From this a consequent mental state arises.
Without that, it would not arise.

10. Since from the intention comes the continuum,
And from that continuum the fruit arises,
Action precedes the fruit.
Therefore there is neither termination nor permanence.

Just as we discussed in the case of the seed, the subsequent mental continuum arises from the mental state concomitant with the virtuous intention. If that mental continuum colored by the virtuous intention meets with all of the requisite auxilliary causes, a pleasant ripened result will occur. If there

were no earlier mental state, the later mental continuum would not arise. The later mental continuum comes from the earlier mental state and the subsequent pleasant effects arise from that continuum and intentional action precedes its effect. Therefore, there is no termination of the continuum of action—that is, cessation—without causing the subsequent mental continuum. And there is no permanence—that is, the endurance without cessation of the continuum after being caused. Therefore, even though the action is asserted to be momentary, there is neither permanence nor termination.

It is not clear from any of the commentaries on *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* which school maintains the view refuted here. However, since it is consistent with what is explained in the ninth chapter of *Abhidharmakośa,* it is the view of the sautrāntrikas and the Kashmiris.

1.1.2.2.1.2 Identifying the ten paths of action with their respective effects

> 11. The ten pure paths of action
> Are the method for practicing the Dharma.
> The fruits of this Dharma in this and other lives
> Are the five sensual pleasures.

Therefore, the divisions of action have been presented: the three physical and four verbal actions by "speech and physical action," etc. [XVII: 4], **[303]** and three mental actions by "as well as intention" [5c]. These are explained to be the ten pure paths of action, and they are the method for practicing the Dharma—that is, the causes of its accomplishment.

"Now," one might ask, "what is that Dharma for the practice of which these ten are the method?" As we explained previously, "Dharma" should be taken to refer to the three attitudes,[7] or, the state of having completely achieved the ten virtues can be taken to be Dharma. The very engagement in them is the meaning of the phrase "path of virtuous action." The fruit of this Dharma is the enjoyment of the five kinds of phenomena, such as pleasant material form in this life and in other lives. Some think that since the ten paths are said to be the means of practicing the Dharma and the experience of sensual pleasures are said to be the fruits of Dharma, the relation between the action and the fruit must exist essentially.

7. See the commentary on XVII: 1.

1.1.2.2.2 Dispelling reification and nihilism through asserting that karma is indestructible

The section has two parts: the refutation of responses of other schools and our own response.

1.1.2.2.2.1 Refutation of responses of other schools

12. If it were conceived in this way
Many serious errors would follow.
Therefore, such a conception
Is not tenable here.

If one thinks that the analysis of the mental continuum as similar to the case of the seed and sprout avoids nihilism and reification, one's position will suffer from many great errors: Homogeneous cases will not have homeogeneous properties, things with heterogeneous properties will not be heterogeneous cases, and there will be contradictions.[8] The rice seed only gives rise to the continuum of a rice sprout and the continuum of the rice sprout only gives rise to rice as an effect, but these never give rise to anything of a heterogeneous species. One would have to say that in the same way, virtuous, nonvirtuous, or morally neutral mental states, mental states associated with the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm; and uncontaminated mental states and the six kinds of transmigrations, such as the human, give rise only to mental states of a homogeneous kind, but not to mental states of a heterogeneous kind. It would follow that a god would only become a god and would not transmigrate to any other kind of transmigration. In that case, a human being or a god who performs nonvirtuous acts would not experience unfavourable transmigrations. But one can not maintain this! **[304]** Since these errors ensue, it is not tenable in the context of this response that one avoids the errors of reification and nihilism through the ideas expressed by other schools.

1.1.2.2.2.2 Our own response

This section has three parts: the brief presentation, the detailed explanation, and the concise disimssal of reification and nihilism.

8. This is a common taxonomy of fallacies in Buddhist logic. Tsong khapa only demonstrates the first of these in this discussion.

1.1.2.2.2.2.1 Brief presentation

> 13. I will now explain
> The analysis advocated by all
> Buddhas, pratyekabuddhas, and śrāvakas
> Which is apposite here.
>
> 14. Karma is indestructible, like a promissory note
> And like a debt.

Here we demonstrate that the analysis propounded by the buddhas, the pratyekabuddhas, and śrāvakas is apposite in the context of this response. What is that analysis? Although all virtuous and nonvirtuous actions cease immediately upon their completion, they are not without effects, because when the karma arises, a nonmental compound called an indestructible element associated with karma arises in the continuum of the agent like a promissory note.

It should be understood that, just like a promissory note, it is indestructible, and the karma to which it gives rise is like the debt. In virtue of executing the promissory note, even though the money has been spent, the creditor will receive the money with interest at a later time. In the same way, even though the action is disintegrated immediately after it is performed, as it endures without destruction, the agent experiences the effect of the action. Once the money is repaid to the creditor—whether or not he still has the money—he cannot claim the money again with the same promissory note. In the same way, when the indestructible karma has ripened—whether or not that effect still remains—it can no longer have anything to do with that agent. Avalokitavrata explains this to be the assertion of the Vaibhāṣikas. [*Avalokitavrata-vṛtti, Vol. III, dBu ma* za 34a]. Therefore, it is different from the Kashmiris' position.

1.1.2.2.2.2.2 Detailed explanation

This section has four parts: The divisions of the realms and their natures, what is to be abandoned, the way one takes birth, and the mode of cessation.

1.1.2.2.2.2.2.1 The divisions of the realms and their natures

> 14dc. Because of the realms, there are four kinds.
> Moreover, its nature is neutral.

It is said in other sūtras that the indestructible karmas that we mention here are, because of the desire, form, formless, and uncontaminated realms,

of four kinds. **[305]** Avalokitavrata says that it should be understood that since karma can be categorized as pertaining to either the three realms or to the uncontaminated, it has to be either contaminated or uncontaminated; but its indestructible nature cannot be said to be either contaminated or uncontaminated. Therefore it is said to be neutral [*dBu ma* za 34b].[9]

When it says that it is not contaminated it refers to contaminated karma. But it does not mean that it is just not contaminated, because it is said to be abandoned through the path of meditation. That indestructible continuum as well can neither be described as virtuous nor nonvirtuous, and thus it is morally neutral. This is because if the indestructibility of the nonvirtuous action were itself nonvirtuous, then since one who is free from attachment to the desire realm does not have any vices, it would follow that he could not have their indestructibility either. If the indestructibility of the virtuous action were itself virtuous on the other hand, then it would follow that the person who has extirpated the roots of virtue through adopting a deviant view would not have its indestructibility.

1.1.2.2.2.2.2.2 What is to be abandoned

> 15. Abandonment does not occur through abandoning.
> Abandonment occurs instead through meditation.
> Therefore, in virtue of indestructibility
> The effect of action arises.

The indestructible continuum is not abandoned through the path of seeing in virtue of the abandonment of that which is to be abandoned by the path of seeing; rather, it is to be abandoned by the path of meditation. "Instead" refers to the abandonment of the indestructable continuum of the actions connected with the realms when one transcends them. If the actions of common beings were not abandoned by the path of seeing, the aryas would retain the karma of common beings. Thus although they abandon that karma, its indestructibility is not to be abandoned by the path of seeing. Although an action is disintegrated, its indestructible continuum does not cease. Although the action is abandoned, since its indestructible continuum is not abandoned in virtue of the indestructibility of the karma, the effect of the action arises.

Suppose one asked, "What error ensues if you say that when actions are abandoned via the antidote, or cease, one abandons the indestructible continuum, or it ceases?"

9. This indirect quotation contracts a much longer and more detailed presentation in the original.

16. If abandonment occurred through abandoning, or
If action were destroyed in virtue of transformation,
Absurd consequences such as
The annihilation of karma would follow.

If the indestructible continuum ceased through ordinary beings' actions being abandoned in virtue of the abandonment of that which is to be abandoned by the path of seeing or through transformation of action—its cessation—then the karma that has been produced would be annihilated—that is, rendered nonexistent. **[306]** Therefore, the words "such as" indicate these additional absurd consequences: In that case the aryas would not experience the two consequences of the karma accumulated when they were ordinary beings; and, even if they did experience them, they would be results of actions that had not been performed; and, since this would be a view according to which there are no effects of actions, this would be a deviant view. This argument applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the transformation of karma.

1.1.2.2.2.2.2.3 The way one takes birth

17. From all the karma in a realm,
Whether congruent or incongruent,
At the moment of conception
Only one will arise.

How could indestructibility arise at conception?[10] When all the other karma is destroyed, only the indestructibility of the karma, whether congruent (that is, of a similar kind) or incongruent (that is, of a dissimilar kind) in whichever of the three realms this conception occurs, arises. Moreover, the indestructible karma corresponding to the congruent realms—such as the desire realm—arises only in those realms, but does not arise in the incongruent realms. After conception, the way the indestructibility arises is as follows:

18. In the here and now,
Each karma and that which pertains to that karma
Of either of the two kinds, arises separately and
Although they ripen, they endure.

In the here and now—that is, in this life—each karma of either of the two kinds, contaminated or uncontaminated—that is, virtuous or nonvirtuous,

10. */nying mtshams sbyor ba/* or *pratisaṁdhi*, the moment when consciousness enters the womb, or in general, into a new life.

whether intention or intentional and that which pertains to it, its indestructibility, arises separately. Although the ripened fruit has already arisen, the indestructibility endures; that is, it undoubtedly does not cease.

1.1.2.2.2.2.2.4 The mode of cessation

> 19. That ceases when one moves
> To a stage of fruition or dies.
> One should understand that it has divisions:
> The uncontaminated and the contaminated.

There are two occasions when the indestructibility disintegrates: At the time when one moves to a stage of fruition, such as that of a stream-enterer, or when one dies, it ceases. The first of these has been explained by "abandonment occurs instead through meditation" [XVII: 15b], and the second has been explained by

> At the moment of conception
> Only one will arise. [XVII: 17cd]

Therefore they are not repeated here. The indestructability should be understood to have two divisions: That of the uncontaminated karma is uncontaminated, and that of the contaminated karma is contaminated. **[307]** According to Avalokitavrata [*dBu ma* za: 38a] they are thus so-called on the basis of the two kinds of karma.

1.1.2.2.2.2.3 Concise disimssal of reification and nihilism

> 20. Emptiness is not annihiliation;
> Cyclic existence is not permanent:
> The doctrine of the indestructability of karma
> Is taught by the Buddha.

Therefore it is tenable that the cessation of action immediately after its performance and its essential nonexistence is its emptiness. But nonetheless, this is not annihiliation because its indestructability ensures that the action has effects. Because there is indestructiblity and since homogeneity as it is fabricated in the continuum of the seed is nonexistent[11] cyclic existence, com-

11. The text is unclear at this point. /*Chud mi za ba yod po'i; phyir dang sa bon gyi rgyun dang chos mthun pa'i brtag pa med pa'i phyir*/. In sDe dge [107b] and Narthong [119a] *Prasannapadā* reads *rteg* instead of *brtag*. The Sanskerit *Kalpanā bhāvāt* is ambiguous. *Kalpanā* could be joined here either with *bhāvat* on with *abhāvat*. The first would read *Because of the existence of fabrication*; the second *because of the nonexistence* of fabrication. Tsong Khapa follows the latter. It appears that Tsong Khapa is working from a no longer extent recession of *Prasannapadā*.

prising the five transmigrations involving different kinds of transmigrators, different manners of birth, and different kinds of realms, exists. Since karma is not asserted to endure inherently its permanence is not asserted either. This doctrine of the indestructibility of karma is the doctrine taught by the Buddha completely free from the slumber of ignorance. Thus Nāgārjuna says that since it is free from the erroneous extremes of reification and nihilism, the conception of karma that we have presented is tenable.

1.2 The reply

This section has three parts: Since karma is essenceless, there is neither nihilism nor reification, the refutation of the essential existence of karma, and demonstrating by examples that, because of essencelessness, things can perform functions.

1.2.1 Since karma is essenceless, there is neither nihilism nor reification

> 21. Why is karma without arising?
> Because it is without essence.
> Because it is not arisen,
> It follows that it is indestructible.

If karma were inherently arisen, then, if it endured until ripening, it would be permanent, and if instead it ceased, it would be annihilated. However, since karma does not arise inherently, how could reification, its essential endurance, or nihilism, its essential cessation, follow? The reason that they do not is that karma does not exist essentially.

If karma does not essentially arise, then why is the following said in sūtra?

> Beings' karma is not destroyed
> Even after a hundred aeons.
> When the assemblage is complete, and the time is right
> The fruit will ripen. [*Vinayakṣurakavastu-sūtra*'*Dul ba* tha 153a, 156a and 157a][12]

[308] The Transcendent Lord's intent here is as follows: Since no karma is arisen through its own characteristic, no karma is destructible. Therefore, this does not undermine our own position.

12. The sDe dge translation is slightly different from the version Tsong khapa quotes, with no difference in meaning. This verse occurs at two places in this sūtra.

Suppose one argued as follows: The śrāvakas argue that if karma were not essentially arisen, there would be no karma, and this would contradict what has been said about the indestructibility of karma. Since "indestructiblity" refers to the fruition of the ripening of karma, how could saying "since karma is not essentially arisen it is indestructible" be a coherent reply to these arguments?

There is no error here; Suppose this opponent has the ultimate in mind. Then, since that karma would be ultimately non-arisen its fruit could not be destroyed. Suppose, on the other hand, he argues that the ultimate non-arising and conventional nondestruction of ripened fruit are contradictory. As has been said many times already, and as will be reiterated below, these are *not* contradictory.

Now suppose one thought as follows: You have offered its lack of existence through its own characteristic as an argument demonstrating that the ripened fruit is not destroyed. So how could this argument establish that the conventional fruition of the ripening karma is not contradictory? This should be understood as it is presented in the *Madhyamakāvatāra*:

> Since it does not cease essentially,
> Even without the foundation consciousness it is possible
> That at some time, even long after the action has ceased,
> Its fruit will arise. [VI: 39]

The present verse of *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* is quoted in this context in *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* and establishes this fact [*dBu ma* 'a 260a].

Now one might argue as follows: It must be accepted that the two kinds of previously accumulated karma can give rise to the two kinds of fruits after a long time. Since the action disintegrates in the second moment after it has arisen, immediately before the effect there is no action. Since the disintegrated action is a nonentity, how could the action give rise to the effect?

In response to this, *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says that some Buddhist schools theorize that since just before cessation the action deposits a potentiality, **[309]** there must be a foundation consciousness, others propose indestructibility, others propose accrual, and others propose the continuum of mind which is marked by latent potentialities. It also says that according to the view that karma is inherently non-arisen, it is not the case that the effect cannot arise from the unceased and nondisintegrated karma. Therefore, since the effect arises from the unceased karma, the relation between karma and effect is completely coherent [260a]. So this says that "unceased" means *essentially unceased*; so, it is inherently unceased but this does not assert that there is no conventional cessation, because it says "at some time, even long after the action has ceased" and

> Similarly, an action which is ceased and essenceless
> Could still produce an effect. [VI: 40cd]

In this context, the autocommentary quotes sūtra [260a]:

> That which is said to be unextinguished and
> That which is said to be the extinction of karma
> From the perspective of emptiness are not extinguished;
> They are extinguished from the conventional perspective.
> [*Pitāputrasamāgama-sūtra, dKon brtsegs dBu ma* nga 50b]

In the system that does not accept the existence of things through their own characteristic even conventionally, it has been established, as explained earlier, that disintegration is a functioning thing.[13] For this reason, although such things as the foundation consciousness are not accepted, the relation between actions and their effects is coherent. Hence it is said that "Since it does not cease essentially," this argument and the arising of effects from ceased actions are not contradictory.

Those who maintain that such things as arising and ceasing exist through their own characteristic, since they maintain that disintegration is a nonentity, cannot make sense of the arising of an effect from a ceased action. The basis of a homogeneous continuum of the disintegration of disintegrated actions is the continuum of the person in which the thought "I am" occurs. That is the basis of the connection between action and effect.

1.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of karma

[310] This section has two parts: undermining essential existence and refuting the argument for essential existence.

1.2.2.1 Undermining essential existence

This section has two parts: the absurd consequences of being permanent and nonproduced and the absurd consequence of the endless fruition of ripened effects.

1.2.2.1.1 The absurd consequences of being permanent and nonproduced

This section has two parts: the principal absurd consequences and undermining such assertions.

13. Tsong khapa is referring to the discussions of disintegration in Chapter VII.

1.2.2.1.1.1 Principal absurd consequences

22. If action had an essence,
    It would, without doubt, be eternal.
    Action would be unproduced, because
    There can be no production of what is eternal.

Undoubtedly, one must maintain the essencelessness of action, because, if action did exist essentially, it would without doubt be eternal, since essence cannot be transformed. Therefore, action would not be performed by an agent, because there is no production by an agent of a permanent thing. It would follow that the fruition of effects in the world would occur despite neither virtuous nor nonvirtuous actions being performed.

1.2.2.1.1.2 Undermining such assertions

This section has two parts: showing that it contradicts treatises and showing that it contradicts common sense.

1.2.2.1.1.2.1 Showing that it contradicts treatises

23. If action were not produced,
    One would have to fear encountering something not engendered.
    And the absurd consequence would ensue
    That one would nonetheless not keep one's vows.

If action were not produced by an agent, although such things as killing would not have been performed, one would have to fear encountering the effects of those actions, even though those actions had not been performed. So from this view the erroneous consequence would follow that those who strictly keep by their vows nonetheless—even though they have not broken their vows—would not keep their vows. Therefore, nobody would attain liberation.

1.2.2.1.1.2.2 Showing that it contradicts common sense

24. All conventions would also
    Be contradicted, without doubt.
    It would be impossible to draw a distinction
    Between virtue and evil.

Even without making any effort, such as plowing fields and doing business one could achieve the fruits of such activities. So there would be no point in making any effort. This would undoubtedly be in conflict with all worldly conventions such as saying, "make a pot," or "weave a cloth," because everything, including such things as pots, would already exist without being made. One could not draw distinctions such as that drawn by saying "he performs virtuous deeds" and "he performs evil deeds," **[311]** because these two kinds of deeds would exist even without being performed.

1.2.2.1.2 The absurd consequence of the endless fruition of ripened effects

> 25. Any ripened result would ripen
> Time and time again.
> If there were essence this would follow,
> Because karma would endure.

Moreover, that karma having ripened as the result would ripen time and time again because it would be just like the unripened stage, having not lost its identity. So, suppose someone thought that karma existed essentially. Then, since karma would exist eternally, enduring without transformation, all of the errors previously explained would ensue. Therefore, since karma does not exist essentially, we commit neither the error of reification nor that of nihilism.

1.2.2.2 Refuting the argument for essential existence

This section has three parts: the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of karma, the refutation of the argument for the essential existence of both karma and affliction, and the refutation of another argument for the essential existence of karma.

1.2.2.2.1 Refutation of the argument for the essential existence of karma

Suppose one argued as follows: It does exist essentially, because it is said that, conditioned by ignorance, there are actions and, conditioned by grasping, there is existence, and because the afflictions—the cause of karma—exist essentially.

> 26. While this karma has affliction as its nature
> This affliction does not exist in reality.

Since affliction does not exist in reality,
How can karma exist in reality?

This contaminated karma has affliction as its nature; that is, it is arisen from affliction, and those afflictions as well do not exist in reality either, because, as will be explained, they have arisen through the power of conception. Since the afflictions do not exist in reality, how can that which they cause—karma—exist in reality? It cannot!

1.2.2.2.2 Refutation of the argument for the essential existence of both karma and affliction

Suppose one said that karma and the afflictions exist essentially, because their effect—the body—exists essentially.

27. Karma and affliction
Are shown to be the conditions that produce bodies.
If karma and affliction
Are empty, what should one say about bodies?

It is said in sūtra that karma and the afflictions are the conditions of the arising of the body. Since it has been established by previous explanations that karma and the afflictions are empty of existing essentially, their effect, the body, does not exist inherently. **[312]** What else could one say about that? Nothing!

1.2.2.2.3 Refutation of another argument for the essential existence of karma

28. The person who is clouded by ignorance
And overcome by craving—the experiencer—
Is neither different from the agent
Nor is it itself identical to it.

Suppose someone argued as follows: Karma exists essentially because its effect—the experiencer—exists essentially. Clouded by ignorance, that is, impaired, being reborn again and again in the five kinds of transmigration, the person who is overcome by craving is the experiencer of the effect of karma. This experiencer of the effect of karma is not different from the agent of its cause—the action—but that experiencer itself is also not said to be that agent. So it is ineffable in terms of identity or difference.

29. Since this action
Is not arisen from a condition,

Nor arisen from that which is not a condition,
It follows that there is no agent.

It has been explained in the chapter on the examination of conditions that this action does not exist essentially, in virtue of being arisen from the four conditions, such things as the efficient condition. Nor is it arisen from that which is not a condition as is explained by:

Without a cause
The effect and the cause will not be possible [VIII: 4ab]

in the examination of agent and action. Therefore, the agent of action also does not exist essentially.

30. If there is no action and agent,
Where could the effect arisen from action be?
If there is no effect,
Where could the experiencer be?

If the action and agent do not exist inherently, how could the effect which is arisen from the action exist inherently? It could not! If the effect of the action does not exist inherently, how could the experiencer exist inherently? So it should be understood that all of these things are absolutely essenceless.

1.2.3 Demonstrating by examples that, because of essencelessness, things can perform functions

Suppose someone argued as follows: Since according to your ontology, things are essenceless, you contradict all of the statements of the Buddha to the effect that one experiences oneself the results of the actions one performs. Since you have deprecated the whole system of karma and the effects of actions, you have become the greatest of nihilists!

We are *not* nihilists, because through refuting both the extremes of reification and nihilism we clear the nondualistic path leading to the city of nirvana. In this context we repudiate the nihilistic view by declaring that according to us **[313]** actions and effects are not nonexistent. Then what is the point? The statement, "as per our ontology, these things are essenceless" [*Prasannapadā* 109b], is the way we repudiate reification. Thus, we we have demonstrated that if one denies the conventional existence of action and effect, one falls into the extreme of nihilism, and that if one asserts that they exist essentially, one falls into the extreme of reification; but to assert that they *merely* exist or *merely* do not exist is not to succumb to these extremes.

The charge that you cannot avoid error in the context of essencelessness, since action and agent would not be tenable, means this: although you claim

not to assert that things are nonexistent, but only to assert that they do not exist essentially, you cannot avoid the error of asserting the untenability of action and effect.

In response to this *Prasannapadā* says,

> Because action is not seen to occur in things with essence, and because action is seen to occur in essenceless things, only an essenceless pot is ordinarily seen to be a functioning thing. [109b]

Thus, this shows that if they existed essentially, no actions and agents such as the produced and producers would be tenable; only in the context of essencelessness are action and agent tenable, because the arguments that refute the essential existence of such things as actions and consequences support the tenability of actions and agents in the context of essencelessness; but they do not at all refute their *being* actions and agents. This argument should be applied quite generally.

> 31. Just as when the teacher,
> Through his miraculous powers,
> Emanates a body, and that emanation
> Emanates another emanated body,
>
> 32. So is the agent's performance of the action
> Just like the process of emanation.
> It is just like one emanation
> Emanating another.

Moreover, the fact that things function just because they are essenceless can be ascertained through these lucid examples. Consider, for instance, when the teacher, through his miraculous powers, emanates an emanated body, and that emanated body again emanates yet another emanated body. Just as these two emanated bodies are empty of the essence of the Tathāgata and so are essenceless, they perform essenceless actions, and so these are conventionally called action and agent. In the same way, the agent of the action is, **[314]** like the process of emanation, essentially empty. Even the slightest action performed by the agent is essenceless, just like the emanation of one emanated body by another. Therefore, how could the mādhyamika who subscribes to nonduality hold the wrong views of reification and nihilism? The *Samādhirājasūtra* says:

> When the tathāgatas, the protectors, give teachings,
> Out of compassion for the man on the street
> The victors emanate emanated bodies;
> The buddhas even give noble teachings to them!

When hundreds of thousands of beings heard that,
They prayed for the supreme wisdom of the Buddha.
Asking, "When shall I attain wisdom like that?"
Being aware of their wish the victors prophesied:

He who invokes the victor, the supreme human being,
Will develop boundless generosity.
Saying that the inconceivable supreme achievement is attained,
Some develop aspiration toward it. [*mDo sde* da 36b]

33. Afflictions, actions, bodies,
Agents and effects are
Like a city of gandharvas and
Like a mirage or a dream.

One should understand that action and agent are tenable in the context of essencelessness not only through the example of emanations, but also through these other examples. The afflictions are such things as desire, which afflict the mental continuum; the actions are such things as meritorious, nonmeritorious, and unshakable actions; the body is the physical body; the agent is the self; and the fruits are such things as the ripened result, the environmental result, and the concordant result. These, like the city of the gandharvas, the mirage, and the dream, should be understood to be essenceless. Therefore, it should be understood that since they do not maintain that entities exist through their own characteristics, only the mādhyamikas are free from asserting the two extreme positions of reification and nihilism.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that the presentation of such things as karma and affliction as empty of inherent existence can also be corroborated by profound scriptures and to demonstrate that all of the sūtras that address this issue are explained by this chapter. The *Ratnakūṭa-sūtra* says that this is like the story in which two emanated monks subdued five hundred obsessed people. [*dkon cha brtsegs* 147a].

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

These arguments refute the essential existence of agent, action, afflictions, their effects, and the experiencing of those effects, etc. They should be understood as showing that it is not at all tenable to posit them in the context of

inherent existence. So such things as agents are tenable only in the following sense: Although they are empty of existence through their own characteristics, they appear to exist in this way: just like dreams, illusions, emanations, and cities of gandharvas.

This is the commentary on the seventeenth chapter, having thirty-three verses, called "the examination of action."

CHAPTER XVIII

Examination of the Self and Phenomena

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 The mode of engaging with things as they really are
    1.1.1 Establishing the view of the way things really are
      1.1.1.1 Refutation of the inherent existence of the self
        1.1.1.1.1 The initial mode of analysis of those who aspire to liberation
        1.1.1.1.2 The subsequent mode of establishing the view of selflessness
          1.1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of the self and the aggregates having the same nature
          1.1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of the self and the aggregates having different natures
      1.1.1.2 Showing that thereby the inherent existence of *being mine* is refuted
    1.1.2 The method for eliminating faults by meditating on it
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        1.1.2.1.1 The way to eliminate the view of the transitory aggregates
        1.1.2.1.2 Rebutting the argument against it
        1.1.2.1.3 The way to eliminate birth by eliminating grasping
      1.1.2.2 The way one attains liberation
  1.2 Dispelling the charge that this contradicts sūtras
    1.2.1 The principal rebuttal of contradiction with sūtras
    1.2.2 The reason that the way things really are is ineffable
  1.3 The process leading to the realization of how things really exist
  1.4 The characteristics of things as they really are
    1.4.1 The characteristics of things as they really are according to the āryas

1.4.2 The characteristics of things as they really are according to ordinary people
1.5 Showing that one must practice this
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[315:12] We have now completed the second part of the section on the two selflessnesses, the demonstration that mere phenomena are essentially empty. This chapter comprises the third of its five parts: the mode of positing the selflessness of things as they really are. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

This section has five parts: the mode of engaging with things as they really are, dispelling the charge that this contradicts sūtras, the process leading to the realization of how things really exist, the characteristics of things as they really are, and showing that one must practice this.

1.1 The mode of engaging with things as they really are

This section has two parts: establishing the view of the way things really are and the method for eliminating faults by meditating on it.

1.1.1 Establishing the view of the way things really are

Here someone might ask: If such things as the afflictions and actions are like such things as a city of gandharvas, not existing in reality even though they appear to fools to exist in reality, then what *is* the way that things really are **[316]** and how does one *engage* with things as they really are? To completely eliminate all grasping of inner and outer phenomena as the self and as that which belongs to the self, respectively, through not objectifying inner and outer phenomena is to see the way things really are. The details of the mode of engagement with the way things really are should be understood as is explained in *Madhyamakāvatāra* through statements such as this:

> Seeing through wisdom that all of the afflictions and faults
> Arise from the view objectifying the transitory aggregates
> Realizing that the self is the object of this view,
> The practitioner rejects such a self. [VI: 120]

Here is a brief explanation of this as contained in the root text. This section has two parts: the refutation of the inherent existence of the self and showing that thereby the inherent existence of *being mine* is refuted.

1.1.1.1 Refutation of the inherent existence of the self

This section has two parts: the initial mode of analysis of those who aspire to liberation and the subsequent mode of establishing the view of selflessness.

1.1.1.1.1 The initial mode of analysis of those who aspire to liberation

Since the truth of suffering was taught as the first of the four noble truths, when one meditates on the many general and particular evils of cyclic existence, the practitioner aspires to engage with the way things really are, aspires to abandon such disadvantages as birth and death in cyclic existence, and aspires to abandon the afflictions such as the fault of desire. While so engaged, seeing that without undoing the cause, the effect cannot be eliminated, he then analyzes, thinking, "What could be the root of this cyclic existence?" On analysis he sees that the view of the transitory aggregates is the root of cyclic existence and sees that by abandoning *that* all of the afflictions and faults can be eliminated.

How, one might then ask, is the view of the transitory aggregates to be abandoned? In general, all of the chapters undermine the existence of the object that is grasped by erroneous conception. Thereby the subject's grasping is dispelled. This chapter in particular examines the self that is grasped through the view of the transitory aggregates in terms of whether it is identical to or different from the aggregates. **[317]** Through dispelling the object, the grasping of the self and *being mine* is said to be eliminated. The *Catuḥśataka* says:

> When selflessness is seen in the object,
> The seed of cyclic existence is destroyed. [XIV: 24cd]

It thus says that seeing the nonexistence of the self that is grasped through self-grasping is necessary for liberation from cyclic existence. And the *Pramāṇavārtika* says:

> Without eliminating its object,
> It cannot be eliminated. [II: 223ab]

Thus, in this respect all of the great charioteers have the same idea and speak with the same voice.

Therefore, it does not make sense to maintain that one can achieve liberation from cyclic existence by simply becoming accustomed to detaching one's mind from the self and from *being mine*, without understanding the way the self is grasped through self-grasping and the proper way to use stainless arguments to eliminate the grasped self. That is because although through that practice one does not engage with the object of self-grasping, one does not engage with the object of selflessness. Therefore, that practice can never undermine self-grasping at all. If it could, then in order to meditate on the way things really are, there would be no need to develop the nonerroneous view. It would follow that all of the explanations of how things really are in the treatises and sūtras would be purposeless and meaningless.

Nor should it be said that although it is necessary to develop this view at the stage of hearing and contemplation, this is not necessary at the stage of meditation. This is because that very thing which has been established through hearing and contemplation is for the purpose of familiarizing the mind with the view at the stage of meditation and because "the practitioner rejects such a self" [*Madhyamakāvatāra* VI: 120] means that the practitioner does that through meditation.

Thus the practitioner, seeing that the abandonment of the view of the transitory aggregates depends on establishing the essencelessness of the object as grasped by it, and also seeing that **[318]** its object is the self, at the very beginning, analyzes the self, inquiring as to whether or not the self—the object of self-grasping—exist inherently.

1.1.1.1.2 The subsequent mode of establishing the view of selflessness

This section has two parts: refutation of the self and the aggregates having the same nature and the refutation of the self and the aggregates having different natures.

1.1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of the self and the aggregates having the same nature

> 1. If the aggregates were the self,
> It would have to arise and cease.

If the self—the object of self-grasping—existed inherently, one could not escape two alternatives regarding its mode of existence. Thus we should analyze to determine whether it, through its own characteristic, is identical to or different from the aggregates. Of identity and nonidentity, when one is elimi-

nated, the other is affirmed by that elimination. Thus the third possibility is excluded.

According to such an analysis, if the self and the aggregates had the same nature through their own characteristics, the self would have to be arising and ceasing at each moment, because the aggregates arise and cease at each moment. The self is not maintained to be like that by the other schools; nor can our own schools maintain it to be that way, because if the self, which is the basis on which the thought "I am" arises, were identical to the aggregates through its own characteristic, then it would even be identical to the aggregates of this life. In that case, the self would have arisen in this life despite not having existed in other lives, and so life would have a beginning. This will be discussed further in chapter twenty-seven.

Moreover, if each arising and ceasing were located at a distinct moment, they would be distinct from one another through their own characteristics. In that case it would not be possible to remember, for instance, "I became King Māndhātā," because the self of that time, just like the body, would be disintegrated, and in this life the self would have arisen as different through its own characteristic.

Moreover, since there are many aggregates, there would have to be many selves. Since "self" would be merely a synonym for "aggregates" it would be senseless to assert that the self exists substantially, and the appropriated itself would be the appropriator. **[319]** One would thus commit the error of asserting that the agent and object are identical. Thus, through these arguments one should develop certainty that the self and the aggregates are not inherently identical.

1.1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of the self and the aggregates having different natures

> 1cd. If it were different from the aggregates,
> It would not have the characteristics of the aggregates.

If the self were different from the aggregates through its own characteristic, the self would not have (that is, would lack) the characteristics (that is, arising, enduring, and ceasing) which characterize the aggregates as compounded phenomena, just as a horse does not have the characteristics of a cow. In that case, there would be no self because it would not be produced and would be like nirvana or like a sky flower. Of the two—the object and the representation of innate self-grasping—such a self could not be the object, because it is not produced.

On the other hand, the characteristics of the self would be inherently different from the characteristics of of the five aggregates, including being ma-

terial, experiencing, discriminating,[1] and being compounded; being conscious of each object. If one maintained that, then just as the mind is grasped as different from form, the self would be seen to be different from the aggregates. But it is not grasped like that.

Suppose one said that this does not undermine the assertion of the other schools that the self is substantially different from the aggregates. Although they say that it is substantially different, they do not say this on the grounds that it is perceived by an innate cognitive process as they have claimed. Then what do they say? Not understanding the meaning of "dependent designation," fearing to say that the self is merely a nominal imputation, they discredit the conventional truth and having been deceived by sophistries; fantasizing, they say that the characteristic of the self is substantially different from those of the aggregates.

When it is said in such places as the Examination of Agent and Action that the self and the appropriator exist in mutual dependence, **[320]** those arguments also refute the imagined self existing even conventionally. So if the self existed inherently, the self and the aggregates would have to be either identical or different through their own characteristics. When both of these positions are seen to have been undermined by arguments, one develops complete certainty that the self cannot exist inherently even the slightest bit. This is to develop an understanding of the view according to which the object of self-grasping through the innate view of the transitory aggregates is essenceless.

1.1.1.2 Showing that thereby the inherent existence of *being mine* is refuted

> 2. If the self does not exist
> Where would being *being mine* be?

When we analyze *being mine,* which is the object grasped by the thought "this is mine" through the innate view of the transitory aggregates, inquiring whether or not it exists through its own characteristic, wondering how, since the self does not exist inherently, *being mine* could exist inherently, *being mine* is understood to be essenceless. The cognitive process itself that understands the essencelessness of what is called "I" does not grasp the essencelessness of *being mine*. But when the mind analyzes whether or not *being mine* exists essentially, and turns its attention to its previous understanding, then, depending on that previous cognitive process, without needing any further proof, this

1. *Tshad mar 'dzin pa.*

understanding of the essencelessness of *being mine* develops. Therefore, in the treatises it is said that this is established through the approach used in the previous arguments, and a separate argument is not provided.

So, when I and *being mine* are established to be essenceless, one comprehends the emptiness which is the diametric opposite of the entire mode of apprehension constituted by the view that is the root of cyclic existence—the view of the transitory aggregates. No more is said about that here.

1.1.2 The method for eliminating faults by meditating on it

This section has two parts: the process of eliminating faults and the way one attains liberation.

1.1.2.1 The process of eliminating faults

This section has three parts: the way to eliminate the view of the transitory aggregates, rebutting the argument against it, and the way to eliminate birth by eliminating grasping.

1.1.2.1.1 The way to eliminate the view of the transitory aggregates

> 2cd. In virtue of the pacification of the self and *being mine*
> There will be no grasping onto "I and mine."

Depending on regular meditation on the view obtained through establishing that neither I nor *being mine* exist inherently, **[321]** the representations, *viz.*, the self (that is, the object of self-grasping, the person) and *being mine* (that is, the object of the grasping of *being mine*, the aggregates) are pacified—that is, without perceiving any of these, subject and object are dissolved. Once the practitioner has abandoned the view of the transitory aggregates—that the self exists essentially and being mine exists essentially—these become nonexistent, because the correct view and that which is to be abandoned are diametrically opposed modes of apprehension of the same object, because the former is engaged with the real facts. The details of the practice through mental quiescence and the cultivation of special insight are explained in *The Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*[2] and therefore are not spelled out here.

2. *Lam rim chen mo.*

1.1.2.1.2 Rebutting the argument against it

Suppose one said that in that case, since the practitioner who has abandoned grasping "I" and "*being mine,*" exists, the self and the aggregates must exist inherently.

> 3. He who does not grasp "I" and "mine,"
> Also does not exist.
> Whoever sees he who does not grasp "I" and "mine,"
> In virtue of that does not see.

Since the self and *being mine* have been explained to be essenceless, nothing other than grasping "I" and grasping "mine" exists either: the practitioner who has abandoned them does not exist inherently. Whoever sees the practitioner who has abandoned—who lacks—the grasping of "I" and "mine" as existing inherently does not see the significance of the way things really are and will not be able to abandon the view of the transitory aggregates—the grasping of "I" and "*being mine.*" Thus is said in sūtra:

> See the internal phenomena as empty!
> See the external phenomena as empty!
> Whoever meditates on emptiness
> Also does not exist.[3]

And the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says:

> The person who is pacified contemplates completely pacified phenomena:
> That contemplator as well never has existed. [*dKon brtsegs* ca 129a][4]

and

> The aggregates are without essence and empty.
> Enlightenment is without essence and empty. **[322]**
> He who practices is also empty of essence.
> This is known by those with wisdom, but not by fools.
> [*Pitāputrasamāgama-sūtra, dKon rtsegs* nga 48b][5]

3. This is apparently from the Sarvāstivādin *Vinayakṣudraka-sūtra,* but this passage is not available in currently extant recensions of the sūtra. It is quoted in the autocommetary to the *Abhidharmakośa* [*mNgon pa* khu 86b], in *Vyākhyāyukti* [*Sems tsam* si 97a], and in *Yogācārabhūmi* [*Sems tsam* tse 205a].

4. The attribution is erroneous. The text is from the *Upālipariprcchā-sūtra.*

5. The attribution in the text to the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* is erroneous.

1.1.2.1.3 The way to eliminate birth by eliminating grasping

4. When the views of the self and *being mine* are extinguished,
   With respect to the internal and the external,
   Appropriation ceases.
   Through this having been eliminated, birth is eliminated.

When the two views of the transitory aggregates—that with respect to the self, *viz.,* the internal, and that with respect to *being mine, viz.,* the external, respectively, as self and *mine*—are eliminated in virtue of the self and *being mine* not being objectified, the four appropriations cease because, as it is said, all the afflictions are rooted in the view of the transitory aggregates, all are arisen from the view of the transitory aggregates, and are caused by the view of the transitory aggregates.

The four appropriations are desire, view, propriety and conduct, assertion that there is a self. They are, in order, desirable material, sound, etc., the bad views besides the view of the transitory aggregates, propriety associated with bad views and impropriety, and the view of the transitory aggregates. Through objectifying these four one covets and becomes attached. When these appropriations are eliminated, taking birth in cyclic existence through the force of karma is eliminated.

1.1.2.2 The way one attains liberation

5. Through the elimination of karma and affliction there is nirvana.
   Karma and affliction come from conceptual thought.
   These come from mental fabrication.
   Fabrication ceases through emptiness.

While the process of eliminating birth is as it was explained earlier, it is still the case that nirvana is attained through the elimination of karma and affliction. This is because when grasping is eliminated, that which it conditions—becoming—does not arise. When these two—afflictions and karma—are eliminated, birth, aging, and death will be eliminated.

Well, then, suppose one asks, "By eliminating what will the afflictions and karmas be eliminated?" The karma relevant to birth in cyclic existence arises from afflictions. The afflictions arise from conceptual thought—improper attitude through which one takes things as pleasant or not pleasant. But these afflictions do not exist inherently.

These improper attitudes arise from being accustomed, from beginningless time to varieties of fabrications of—that is, fixations on—the true existence of such things as knowledge and objects of knowledge, expression and mean-

ing, the pot and cloth, man and woman, obtained and unobtained. The fabrication that is the grasping of things as truly existent **[323]** is eliminated through familiarization with the view according to which all objects are empty. That is the emptiness under consideration. Through meditating on that view, one realizes it. When the seed of the afflictions is eliminated as the culmination of meditation, that emptiness—the termination of fabrications—is called liberation and the attainment of nirvana. The *Catuḥśataka* says:

> The tathāgatas have said in brief that
> Dharma is nonviolence.
> In this context there are only two things:
> Emptiness and nirvana. [XII: 23]

Prajñāpradīpa interprets this as follows: Up to this point the nirvana of the śrāvakas and the pratyekabuddhas is presented. [185a][6]

> Through this having been eliminated, birth is eliminated.

So, the verse

> Having eliminated karma and the afflictions there is nirvana. [XVIII: 5]

presents the nirvana of the Mahāyāna.

The *Buddhapalita*[7] and the *Prasanapadā* [114a–115b] say that both of these present liberation from cyclic existence common to the greater and lesser vehicles. *Prasannapadā* says that Bhāvaviveka's interpretation is not tenable, and is not in accordance with the master's system, as he has not understood that śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas realize the selfishness of phenomena [114a].

The statement in *Ratnāvalī* [I: 79] that those in our own schools who fear foundationlessness have not assimilated the meaning of "the way things really are" refers to the śrāvaka schools who subscribe to the tenets of the Vaibhāsikas and the Sautrāntikas. But it does not state that all of those who follow the lesser vehicle have not assimilated that. Practitioners of the lesser vehicle who realize the way the person and entities really stand and abandon the extremes—the precipices of reification and nihilism—through the view free from the two extremes are mādhyamikas. They could fall into the extreme of eternal peace,[8] but that does not undermine their being mādhyamikas. Otherwise it would follow that no practitioner could be a mādhyamika until he is free both from

6. *Prajñāpradīpa* continues to say that since the first liberation is seen as deriving from seeing the selflessness of the person it is that of the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.

7. Buddhapālita does not explicitly make this claim in the commentary on these two verses, but his commentary does not draw the distinction drawn in *Prajñāpradīpa*. The closest he comes is [241b] where he states that besides emptiness nothing else is nirvana.

8. This is the extreme view that holds that the highest goal of practice is the achievement for oneself of eternal peace.

the bondage of cyclic existence and from the weakness of being in eternal peace.

1.2 Dispelling the charge that this contradicts sūtras

This section has two parts: **[324]** the principal rebuttal of contradiction with sūtras and the reason that the way things really are is ineffable.

1.2.1 The principal rebuttal of contradiction with sūtras

Suppose someone asks: Does not the position that from the perspective of the direct realization of the way things really are internal and external things are not perceived, and so that the elimination of the view of the transitory aggregates concerning these two is itself the way things really are, contradict the many statements in sūtra such as these?

> One is the protector of oneself.
> Who else would be your protector?
> Through the proper training of himself
> The wise one achieves high status. [*Dhammapada XII:* 4, also quoted in *Abhiniṣkramamaṇa-sūtra, mDo sde* sa 229b]

and

> Neither black nor white karma is destroyed.
> Whatever one has done is to be experienced. [*Samādhirāja-sūtra, mDo sde* da 147b]

On the other hand, it is also said in sūtra:

> Here selves—that is, sentient beings—do not exist.
> All of these phenomena have causes.[9]

and similarly,

> The self is not material form, the self does not possess form, the self does not have form. [*Vinayavastu, 'Dul ba* nga 44b]

The other four aggregates are also explained to be similar. It is also said that all phenomena are selfless [*Vināyakṣudrakavastu, 'Dul ba* tha 151b]. See also *Abhiniṣkramaṃaṇa-sūtra* [*mDo sde* sa 62a].

So why do *these* not contradict the sūtras cited previously?

9. This is another quotation from *Vinayakṣudraka-sūtra,* quoted in the same passages noted in note [3] above.

6. The Buddhas have designated a self;
And have taught that there is no self;
And also have taught that
There is neither self nor selflessness.

Therefore, one should try to determine what the intention is behind such teachings of the Victor. This is the intention: Inferior beings are those who deprecate the self and sentient beings coming from previous lives to this life and passing to another life from this life as well as their experiencing happiness and suffering in the next life as a consequence of the vicious and virtuous actions they perform in this life. In order to stop them from wantonly engaging in evil deeds, the buddhas, in some sūtras, designate a self—that is, they posit the existence of the self.

Intermediate beings are those who perform virtuous acts and have turned away from vicious acts, but who are tightly bound like a bird who is tethered by a long thread; although they can go a fair distance, **[325]** they cannot transcend the three realms to the city of nirvana. In order to loosen their view of the transitory aggregates and in order to cultivate their aspiration to nirvana, they are also addressed in some sūtras and are taught that there is no self.

Supreme beings are those who, due to their prior familiarization, have ripened the seed of the aspiration to the profound Dharma and who are capable of fathoming the profound meaning of the teachings. They are addressed and are taught that neither any self nor any selflessness is inherently existent. In the *Kaśyapa-paripṛcchā-sūtra* it says,

> Oh, Kaśyapa, to say that there is a self is one extreme! To say that there is no self is a second extreme! The middle way between these two extremes is the formless, the indemonstrable, the groundless, the nonapparent, the noncognizable, the foundationless. Oh, Kaśyapa, this is the middle path, the perfect discriminative analysis of all phenomena. [*dKon brtsegs* cha 131a]

And in *Ratnāvalī* it says:

Thus neither self nor selflessness
Is seen in reality.
The views of self and selflessness
Are therefore rejected by the great sage.

Such things as seeing and hearing are said by the sage
To be neither true nor false.
Each position entails its opposite.[10]
Therefore neither corresponds to reality. [II: 3, 4]

10. Tsong khapa has *phyogs las mi mthun phyogs 'gyur bas* instead of *phyogs las mi mthun phyogs 'gyur na* which is found in all extant canonical editions.

Although conventionally, self and selflessness exist, ultimately they are nonexistent. Therefore, they cannot be perceived in reality. It says that neither the position of selflessness nor its counterposition, that there is a self, corresponds to reality. This same order is presented by *Catuḥśataka:*

> First vice is to be rejected
> In the middle, the self is to be rejected.
> In the end, all views are to be rejected.
> Whoever understands this is wise. [VIII: 15]

[326] The verses starting "just as the grammarians" [*Ratnāvalī* IV: 94–96][11] make the same point.

Without eliminating the independent, substantially existent person—the object of grasping—saying that there is a self which does such things as accumulating karma and experiences its effects is for cultivating the ascertainment of karma and its effect so that beings do not fall into unfavorable transmigrations and so as to guide them to more favorable transmigrations.

Eliminating the object of grasping—the independent, substantially existent person—presenting such a self as nonexistent, but not eliminating the substantially existing aggregates as objects of grasping, is merely for loosening the view of the transitory aggregates, but is not for its eradication. Therefore, of the sixteen attributes of the four noble truths, such as impermanence, the emptiness and selflessness associated with the path, grounded in the nonexistence of the substantially existent person, do not eliminate the afflictions.

The teachings presenting both the refutations of the inherent existence of the person and of the inherent existence of its negation constitute the path which eliminates all afflictions. This is an explanation of how the three verbs, "said," etc., are connected with the subject "the buddhas" when it is read first, followed by "have said that there is a self."[12]

Now here, the explicit explanation of the connection of the subject "the buddhas" specifically to the third verb in the root text is as follows: As the

11. Just as the grammarians
Begin by teaching the alphabet,
So the buddha teaches his disciples
Just as much Dharma as they can receive:

For some he gives teachings
To turn them away from evil;
For some, to enable them to achieve virtue;
For some, teachings based on duality;

For some, teachings based on nonduality.
For some, who are fixated and fear the profound,
He taught emptiness, to enable them to achieve
The enlightenment whose essence is compassion.

12. In the Tibetan and Sanskrit, *The buddhas* occurs in the third line. In order to render the verse into readable English we have in fact rearranged it in precisely the way Tsong khapa suggests here.

Sāṁkhyas and the like see it, the fact that produced phenomena are subject to disintegration at every moment is inconsistent with there being a relation between action and effect. Therefore, they imagine that there is a permanent self. Based on fallacious reasoning, the Cārvākas—because, as they see it no person goes from a previous life to this one or from this one to the next—say that such a self does not exist. The Buddhas have said that neither any self whatever nor any selflessness whatever exists essentially. **[327]**

1.2.2 The reason that the way things really are is ineffable

Suppose someone were to ask, "The buddhas have taught that neither self nor selflessness exists essentially; but then what did they teach to be existent?"

> 7. What language expresses is repudiated because
> The domain of thought is repudiated.
> Unarisen and unceased:
> Reality is just like nirvana.

If what language expresses existed ultimately, that would have been taught, but what language expresses is repudiated, that is to say, it does not exist. Therefore, the buddhas have not taught that it does, even the slightest bit. The reason for this is that ultimately the objectification of the domain of thought is repudiated. And the reason for *this* is that the nature of things—that ultimately all phenomena are unarisen and unceased—is just like nirvana. This means that one is just as the other is.

An alternate reading is as follows: This should be explained as a response to the question, "How, when it is said that 'fabrication ceases through emptiness' [XVIII: 5d] can the view of emptiness make fabrication cease?" In this case the point of the last two lines is that it should be so understood.

Another alternative reading goes as follows: It is a response to the question concerning the previous statement that the nonperception of the internal and external objects because of the elimination of the two views of the transitory aggregates [see commentary on XVIII: 4] is itself the way things really are, "Can *that* be expressed by language or known?" This goes as was explained earlier.

1.3 The process leading to the realization of how things really exist

Someone might say here: Since

> Unarisen and unceased:
> Reality is just like nirvana

speech and mind do not directly engage with it. But if reality is not presented, the disciples will not be able to understand. Therefore, there must surely be a way of introducing the disciples to the profound meaning by presenting it depending on the conventional truth. So say what that is.

> 8. Everything is real; and is not real;
> Both real and unreal;
> Neither unreal nor real.
> This is the Lord Buddha's teaching.

The presentation by the victors of the order in which they are to be introduced to the way things really are—the nectar—is as follows: The *Catuḥśataka* says:

> He who aspires and that to which he aspires
> Should be explained at the beginning.
> Degenerates are not in any way
> Appropriate vessels for the perfect teachings. [V: 10]

If one does not explain in the beginning what the disciples already know **[328]** they will degenerate from being appropriate vessels for the profound teachings. As it is said,

> Just as barbarians cannot be led
> By speaking another language,
> One cannot lead ordinary beings
> Without using ordinary means. [VIII: 19]

Explaining what they already know is a means for making them follow. And in the *Trisaṁvaranirdeśa* it says,

> Ordinary people argue with me, but I do not argue with them because whatever is asserted to be in the world I also say exists. Whatever is asserted to be nonexistent in the world I also say is nonexistent. [*dKon brtsegs* ka 9b]

It is said in sūtra that the Dharma is taught in agreement with what is known to ordinary people. So at the very beginning, in order to cultivate the disciples' confidence in his omniscience and in his knowledge all about how the world came into being, the Buddha explained to the disciples who aspire to listen that which is known to them—the categories of the natures of entities as understood in their views; everything in the external or internal world, viz., the aggregates, the elements, the faculties, etc., that those who are clouded by the mists of ignorance imagine to be truly existent—are real, that is, true.

For those disciples who have cultivated confidence in the Buddha's omniscience through this teaching, later on he has taught that what is real is unalterable; and since compounded phenomena cease at every moment, they

alter at every moment and therefore that they are not real. Having explained that they are subtly impermanent, given that they are unreliable, he says that they are not real—that is false—but not that they are not true in virtue of not existing through their own characteristics.

Then later, for some disciples, he presented all phenomena in the external and internal worlds as real—that is, as true from the perspective of fools—but **[329]** taught that from the perspective of the postmeditative state of the exalted beings, they are not real—that is, they are false. This is because he says that their truth and falsity is their being nondeceptive and deceptive, respectively, in terms of whether or not they endure for the second moment as the same entity after having come into existence.

To those who have long familiarity with the profound view in previous lives, but who in this life have not yet abandoned the subtle obscurations, which consist in the grasping of things as truly existent in virtue of philosophical views, in order that they might abandon those subtle obscurations as well, he has said that both are to be rejected, just as it is impossible to imagine either the blueness or the whiteness of the son of a barren woman, neither does that which is not real—that which changes every moment—exist inherently, nor does that which is real—that which does not change every moment—exist inherently. Whether or not something inherently exists determines whether or not transformation into something else occurs.

Therefore, first he gave teachings in order to cultivate confidence in the teacher through the assertion that things are real in virtue of not changing from moment to moment, although they are impermanent in virtue of the termination of the continuum. Second, he gave teachings in order to eliminate the subtle grasping of permanence through the assertion that since things change from moment to moment they are not real. Third, he taught that there are two perspectives in virtue of which things are real or unreal, insofar as they do not change or change from moment to moment, respectively. Fourth, he taught that both that which is permanent and that which is impermanent is void of inherent existence.

This order of presentation diverts people from deviant paths and then leads them to noble paths. Thus since they are also presented by the teacher gradually, as it is appropriate for the minds of the disciples, they are called "teachings."[13] The victors do not teach that which is not a means to enjoy the nectar—the way things really are. **[330]** Just as one prescribes medicine appropriate to the disease he teaches in a way suitable for each addressee. The *Catuḥśataka* says:

> Existence, nonexistence, and both
> As well as neither have been taught.
> Cannot anything be a medicine prescribed
> Depending on the disease? [VIII: 20]

13. Skt. *anuśāscnam* and Tib. *rjessubstan* each contain prefixes indicating order (lexically, *ordered teaching*).

Buddhapālita explains this as follows: The Buddha taught in accordance with ordinary people's knowledge of what is real and what is not real, and that is according to mundane conventions. The refutation of both reality and unreality is from the standpoint of the ultimate. Alternatively, reality, unreality, and both can be the existence, nonexistence, or both, respectively, of the arising of the effect at the time of the cause. The Buddha teaches that they are merely imputed on the basis of causes and conditions through the refutation of the extremes of existence and nonexistence. Therefore, those who aspire to see things as they really are should grasp the way things really are without being fixated on what has been taught to be based merely on mundane conventions [244a–245a].

1.4 The characteristics of things as they really are

This section has two parts: the characteristics of things as they really are according to the āryās and the characteristics of things as they really are according to ordinary people.

1.4.1 The characteristics of things as they really are according to the āryās

Someone might argue as follows: "What are the characteristics of the way things really are as it has been presented, to which one is gradually introduced?"

We then reply: "Since it has been explained that 'what language expresses has been repudiated,' what is there to ask?"

He might then say, "Yes, but in accordance with what is accepted according to the imputations of mundane conventions—that is, from the perspective of conventional truth—it *has* to be possible to say what its characteristics are!"

The statement in *Prasannapadā* that the characteristics must be expressible through imputations [119b] means that they must be able to be expressed through linguistic and conceptual conventions. But this would not be to impute characteristics it does not have, as has been explained in the fifteenth chapter.

> 9. Not dependent on another, peaceful and
> Not fabricated by fabrications,
> Not conceptualized, without distinctions:
> That is the characteristic of things as they really are.

In order to eliminate misconceptions, the way things really are is said to comprise five characteristics. The first one is "not dependent on another": You cannot merely realize it through the teachings of another person **[331]**; it must

be realized on one's own through uncontaminated insight. For example, when someone with cataracts sees falling hairs, someone without cataracts might say that the apparent falling hairs are not real. Nonetheless, although the person with cataracts cannot know the absence of falling hairs in same way as the person without cataracts who does not see the falling hairs, he can at least understand through his explanation that as there are no falling hairs, the appearance is erroneous. When that cataract is cleared through the application of the medicine, the real nature of those falling hairs is realized in virtue of not seeing the appearance of falling hairs in the visual field that had appeared to be full of falling hairs.

In the same way, no matter how the āryas present the way things really are through imputation, merely through that ordinary beings cannot realize its nature in exactly the same way that it is seen through uncontaminated insight. However, when the medicine of the nonerroneous view of the reality of emptiness is applied to the mental eye—when the insight into the way things really are, no longer polluted by the cataracts of ignorance, is cultivated—one will realize the way things really are by oneself, in virtue of not seeing any fabricated appearance. That is in fact the way things really are!

So, although the one to whom falling hairs appear does not realize the absence of falling hairs in virtue of eliminating their appearance, it is not the case that he has not understood the fact that the visual field is empty of falling hairs. Similarly, although ordinary people do not realize the way things really are in virtue of having eliminated dualistic appearance, it is not the case that they cannot understand the ultimate—that is, emptiness of inherent existence.

The second characteristic is "peaceful": Just as someone without cataracts does not see falling hairs, the way things really are is empty of inherent existence, that is, without essence.

The third characteristic is "not fabricated by fabrication": The verbal fabrication by means of which things are fabricated no longer fabricates them; that is, they are inexpressible.

The fourth characteristic is "not conceptualized": Conceptualization is **[332]** the wandering of the mind. When one realizes the way things really are, one is free from that. In sūtra it is said:

> What is the ultimate truth? When there is no wandering of the mind, there is no need to talk about words. [*Akṣayamatinirdeśa-sūtra, dKon brtsegs* ga 123b]

The fifth characteristic is "without distinctions": Just as any one phenomenon is ultimately, so are all other phenomena. Therefore, ultimately there is no individuality. The *Satyadvayāvatāra-sūtra*[14] says

14. Also known as the *Saṁvṛtiparamārthanirdeśa-sūtra*.

> "Oh Mañjuśrī, what is perfect engagement?"
>
> Mañjuśrī said, "Oh son of a god just as reality, the nature of phenomena the completely nonarisen are ultimately equal, so are the uninterrupted.[15] [*mDo sde* ma 248a]

This passage continues extensively.

Thus these five facts are the five characteristics of the way things really are. One should also understand that each subsequent one explains its predecessor.

1.4.2 The characteristics of things as they really are according to ordinary people

> 10. Whatever comes into being dependent on another
> Is neither identical to that thing
> Nor different from it.
> Therefore it is neither annihilated nor permanent.

Any effect that arises in dependence on a cause cannot be inherently identical to that cause, because the absurd consequence would follow that all agents of arising and those to which they give rise would be identical. Therefore there is no permanence in the sense that the effect *just is* the cause which has been transformed. Nor is any effect that arises in dependence on a cause inherently different from that cause, because its dependence on the cause would be inconsistent with its difference. Consequently it would follow that it would arise causelessly. Therefore, there is no annihilation of the continuum of the cause in virtue of the effect not arising from a cause.

Therefore, reasoning in terms of dependent origination shows that cause and effect are neither essentially identical nor essentially different. This argument shows that this position is also free of the errors of reification and nihilism with respect to causes. Besides cause and effect, this also should be understood as the way to dispel both reification and nihilism and essentially existent identity and difference in *all* dependently designated phenomena. **[333]**

1.5 Showing that one must practice this

> 11. This is nectar—the doctrine of
> The Buddhas, patrons of the world.

15. This refers to the five uninterrupted karmas.

Without identity, without distinction,
Not annihilated, not permanent.

The Buddha, the protector of the world and patron of the helpless, has taught the perfect doctrine—the nectar—cutting off aging and death once and for all. This doctrine, as has been previously explained, illuminates the profound meaning of the ultimate: that dependently arisen, dependently designated phenomena are neither inherently identical nor different, nor annihilated nor permanent. Thus, one should exert great effort to obtain this nectar.

12. When the fully enlightened buddhas do not appear,
And when the śrāvakas have disappeared,
The wisdom of the pratyekabuddhas
Will arise completely without a teacher.

The śrāvakas engage with the nectar—the way phenomena really are—through practicing hearing, contemplation, and meditation in that order. They enjoy the nectar of the three trainings—propriety, meditative stabilization, and wisdom—and thereby will certainly attain nirvana, eliminating aging and death. Nonetheless, even though one might have heard this nectar of the Dharma, if, in virtue of the roots of virtue not having yielded their fruit, one does not attain nirvana in this life, one will certainly attain it in future lives through the power of previous causes. The *Catuḥśataka* says,

If having realized this,
One does not achieve liberation here,
One will, in a future life, without effort
Definitely achieve it, just like determinate karma. [VIII: 22]

One might think that if one encounters someone in another life who can teach one the way things really are, that might happen; but, since it is not certain that one will encounter someone like that, it is not certain that nirvana will be achieved in another life. But one *will* thereby definitely attain nirvana because, although in the other life the buddhas who constitute the condition of awakening do not arise in the world and śrāvakas are gone, the wisdom of the pratyekabuddhas will be obtained independently—without relying on or seeking a spiritual friend—and without a community.

These are the explanations of how great things can be achieved by followers of the lesser vehicle. **[334]** This, for those who follow the great vehicle, serves as an eye for seeing other paths leading to the city of liberation. Once one attains nirvana, one merits the title "perfected." The *Sañcayagāthā-sūtra* says:

How could billions of blind people, without a guide
Reach a city without knowing the road?
Similarly even with the other five perfections, but without wisdom,

Without that eye, how could one reach enlightenment?

When a person is well equipped with wisdom,
Then he achieves the eye and thereby he merits that title. [*Sher phyin sna tshogs* ka 6a]

Since this point is so important that, even if one has a doubt regarding whether things are really like that, it must be regarded as significant. In *Catuḥśataka* it says,

Those with little merit do not even
Entertain questions regarding this Dharma.
Even entertaining a question about it
Tears cyclic existence to shreds. [VIII: 5]

One should seek this profound inner meaning and, having sought it, exert effort in its contemplation, just as the wise Bodhisattva Sadāprarudita, having the wisdom to see its benefits, sacrificed his life seeking the perfection of wisdom. The *Catuḥśataka* says:

When one sees reality one achieves the supreme abode.
Even by seeing the slightest bit, one is better off.
Therefore the wise should always cultivate such wisdom
In order to contemplate the inner phenomena. [VIII: 21]

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

This explanation of the essencelessness of the self and of *being mine* is presented by the sūtras cited above as well as in many other profound sūtras. Their meaning is presented in brief by this chapter. It is said that by familiarizing oneself with it one can eliminate all faults. Therefore, one should understand the approach to engaging with the way things really are as it is found in all of the sūtras in which the profound meaning is stated **[335]** just as it is presented here.

But the essence of these scriptures is this: Having understood that, one should see how rare the assemblage of internal and external conditions such as a teacher, time, and resources, etc., is. With a foundation of absolute propriety you should gain familiarity in an isolated place with all of the many things you have studied—the practice of the bodhisattvas in general and the profound meaning in particular. One should not just utter these words without taking them to heart.

The *Pitāputrasamāgama-sūtra* says:[16]

16. The attribution is incorrect. This is from the *Devaputra*.

It is improbable that a Buddha appears; that his teachings persist;
And that one develops confidence in them.
It is also improbable that one attains a human life.
Therefore make a strong effort to obtain the victor's teachings!

Having escaped all eight obstacles to opportunity,
The wise, who have achieved improbable prosperity and opportunity
And who have developed confidence in the teachings of the Tathāgata,
Should practice an appropriate discipline.

Without remaining attached to mere words,
Through hearing the Dharma you should constantly strive
And abide in a solitary place,
And thus become a superior person!

Rely on a spiritual friend who teaches Dharma.
Do not associate with evil friends.
You should adopt an impartial attitude towards all sentient beings
And never be arrogant towards other sentient beings.

With propriety and through extensive study,
Always practice begging and wear castoff rags.
Meditate beneath a tree without distraction.
Do not disparage discarded ointments.

All of these compounded phenomena are uncompounded.
They have identical characteristics and are miragelike.
You should know the only alternative is ultimate reality,
And through perceiving it quickly attain enlightenment.

See the five aggregates to be like an illusion.
Since the six internal and six external faculties
Are said to be like an empty city, **[336]**
You should never rely on them.

Desire and hatred are essentially empty.
Confusion and pride are produced by conceptual thought.
Knowing that conceptual thought is neither arisen
Nor non-arisen you will become a great leader.
[*Susthitamatidevaputraparipṛcchā-sūtra, dKon brtsegs* ca 300a]

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

This chapter presents a prescription for practice that wraps up the profound meaning expounded in the earlier and later chapters. Therefore, having un-

derstood that all that has been expounded philosophically comes down to the essenceless of the self and of phenomena, one must practice as has been explained previously.

This is the commentary on the eighteenth chapter, having twelve verses called "the examination of the self and phenomena."

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CHAPTER XIX

Examination of Time

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 General refutation of the essential existence of the three temporal periods
    1.1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the two temporal periods with respect to whether or not they are dependent on the past
      1.1.1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of time depending on the past
      1.1.1.2 Refutation of the essential existence of time not dependent on the past
    1.1.2 Application of the argument to the two other temporal periods
    1.1.3 Application to other threefold phenomena
  1.2 Individual refutations of the views of the Buddhist and non-Buddhist schools
    1.2.1 Refutation of non-Buddhist presentations of time
    1.2.2 Refutation of our own schools' presentations of time
  1.3 The way to set out the three temporal periods conventionally
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[336:10] We have now completed the third part of the section on the two selflessnesses, the mode of positing selflessness of things as they really are. We are about to begin the fourth section—the presentation of the essential emptiness of time. It has two parts: the refutation of the inherent existence of time and the refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of time. This chapter constitutes the first of those two parts. It has three sections: the expla-

nation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here someone might say, "Things inherently have essence because things are the causes of imputation in the three temporal periods." In this context, the three temporal periods are presented in sūtras, and they are based on things because it is said that the nature of things that have already arisen and ceased is to be in the past; and that of things that have arisen and not ceased is to be in the present; and of that which has not yet come to be is to be in the future. The refutation of this has three parts: the general refutation of the essential existence of the three temporal periods, the individual refutations of the views of the Buddhist and non-Buddhist schools, and the way to set out the three temporal periods conventionally.

1.1 General refutation of the essential existence of the three temporal periods

This section has three parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the two temporal periods **[337]** with respect to whether or not they are dependent on the past, the application of the argument to the other two temporal periods, and the application to other threefold phenomena.

1.1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the two temporal periods with respect to whether or not they are dependent on the past

This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of time depending on the past, and the refutation of the essential existence of time not dependent on the past.

1.1.1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of time depending on the past

1. If the present and the future
Depended on the past,
Then the present and the future
Would have existed in the past.

If the present and the future both existed inherently, then you cannot escape two alternatives: If the present and the future depended on the past, then the present and the future would have to have existed in the past, because if these temporal periods existed inherently, their dependence on the past would also be an essence existing through its own characteristic. Such an essence would be inextricable from them anywhere and at any time, because it is never tenable for essence to transform into anything else.

One might think that just as although there is no darkness in the nature of the lamp each depends on the other to be opposite, so the present and future would not have to exist in the past.[1] But if one maintained that darkness and light existed inherently as essences, then, although they would not be correlative, their dependency would be just like the case at issue, and so this would beg the question. Therefore, this example does not undermine the point.

If those two periods of time existed in the past, they would also be past. In that case, one could also not make sense of the past, because the past has to be posited as that which is past with respect to the present, and the future is that which has not yet come in the present. Therefore without the present, this would not be possible.

2. If the present and future
Did not exist there,
How could the present and the
Future be dependent on it?

Moreover, intending to rebut the charges just leveled, one might think that the present and the future do not exist in the past. In that case, how could these temporal periods depend on the past? They could not!

1.1.1.2 Refutation of the essential existence of time not dependent on the past

One might think that according to those who maintain that the past is permanent, these two temporal periods do not have to depend on the past.

3. Without depending on the past,
Neither of the two could be established.
Therefore neither the present nor
The future could exist.

[338] But without depending on the past, these two could not be established. This is because after obtaining its identity[2] the present of such a thing

1. This last clause in English is an expansion for clarity of *khyab pa med do* (*the categorization is not present.*)
2. That is, when it comes to exist *as* a sprout.

as a sprout must be posited as that which has not shed or passed beyond that status. Thus, this would be inconsistent with the present not depending on the past. Therefore, the future must also be indirectly dependent on the past, because the future is posited as that which has yet to come in the present.

If these two temporal periods were not dependent upon the past, they would not be dependent on anything else. In that case, not being dependent, they would be nonexistent, just like the horns of an ass. So they neither exist inherently dependent on the past nor independent of the past. Therefore, these two temporal periods—the present and the future—do not exist inherently.

1.1.2 Application of the argument to the two other temporal periods

> 4. By this very method, with substitution,
> The remaining two; as well as. . . .

In the same way, whether or not the future and the past depend on the present, and whether or not these two—the past and present—depend on the future, none of these exist inherently. Once one understands this one should then understand, through this method of argument, which refutes the inherent existence of these two whether or not they depend on the past, that whether or not the remaining pairs of temporal periods are dependent on the present and the future, respectively, the refutation of their inherent existence proceeds in the same manner, *mutatis mutandis*. So one could say, rearranging the text from

> If the past and the future
> Depended on the present,

to

> Therefore neither the past nor
> The future could exist.

and from

> If the past and the present
> Depended on the future,

to

> Therefore neither the past nor
> The present could exist.

1.1.3 Application to other threefold phenomena

> 4cd. Superior, inferior, average, etc.; and
> Unity, etc., should be understood.

One should understand that this method of analysis of the three temporal periods also explains the following triads, superior, inferior, and average, and the others indicated by "etc." such as virtuous, vicious, and morally neutral; **[339]** arising, enduring, and ceasing; first, last, and middle; the three realms; one in training, one beyond training, and one who is neither; unity and those indicated by "etc.,"such as duality and multiplicity; and everything else that is threefold. In brief, if the superior and inferior existed through their own characteristics depending on the average, if the superior and the average existed through their own characteristics depending on the inferior, if the inferior and average existed through their own characteristics depending on the superior, if unity and duality existed through their own characteristics depending on multiplicity, if unity and multiplicity existed through their own characteristics depending on duality, and if duality and multiplicity existed through their own characteristics depending on unity, then they would have to exist at all temporal periods and places where that on which they depend exists. And if they did not exist in that manner, they would not depend on them in that way.

Since it is not tenable for them to exist without being mutually dependent, they do not exist inherently; but it is not the case that they do not exist through the force of mundane convention. All of the others should be understood in this way.

1.2 Individual refutations of the views of the Buddhist and non-Buddhist schools

This section has two parts: the refutation of non-Buddhist presentations of time, and the refutation of our own schools' presentations of time.

1.2.1 Refutation of non-Buddhist presentations of time

Suppose one said, "Time exists essentially because it is measured in seconds, minutes, and hours,[3] and days and nights, etc., which are different things."

3. Actually, moments, 60th or 360th parts of moments, depending on philosophical school, and 30th of a day; but nothing hangs on the precise intervals.

5. A nonenduring time is not grasped.
   Nothing one could grasp as time
   Could exist as enduring.
   If time is not grasped, how it is known?

If what is called "time" endures as a separate entity from such intervals as seconds, then it would be grasped as being measured in such intervals as seconds. However, what is called "time" is not to be grasped in terms of such intervals as seconds; it does not endure immutably. Therefore, since it does not so endure, time is not grasped through such intervals as seconds, which are different entities from it.

Suppose one reasoned as follows: Permanent time exists. It is manifested in such intervals as seconds because, as it is said,

Time ripens elements.
Time assembles the people.
Time awakes the sleeper.
It is difficult to transcend time. [*Dharmadhātudarśanagīti, rGyud* zhi 260a][4]

[340] So time exists with such characteristics.

Time—that which is manifested in such intervals as seconds and is to be grasped—does not endure immutably, because if it existed as a different entity from such things as seconds it would have to be perceptible. But it is not perceptible. Moreover, we can examine whether this time exists essentially as produced or unproduced. Both alternatives have already been refuted by

Since arising, enduring, and ceasing
Do not exist, there are no produced things. [VII: 33ab]

No such time is perceived through any authoritative cognition. So, how could time that is not perceived be posited through being measured in such intervals as seconds? It cannot!

1.2.2 Refutation of our own schools' presentations of time

Suppose someone argues as follows: Although it is true that time is not permanent, time, which is designated in dependence on compounded phenomena such as material form, is the referent of terms such as "seconds."

4. The version quoted here differs slightly from that in the sDe dge: Tsong khapa has *Dus kyis 'byung ba smin par byed/dus kyis skye dgu sdud par byed/dus kyis gnyid log sad par byed/dus las 'da' bar shin tu dka'//* whereas the sDe dge has *Dus nyid 'da' bar dka' ba yin/'byung ba rnams ni das kyis 'byin/ske dgu rnams sdad dus kyis byed/ dus la ltos par smra ba rnams//*. There is no significant difference in meaning.

6. If time depends on an entity
Then without an entity how could time exist?
Since there are no entities at all,
How can time exist?

Without the existence of entities such as form—that is, those things from which time is a different entity—how could time exist? It does not. Therefore, time is posited in dependence on entities such as material form. So, since as per the arguments that have been presented earlier and which will be presented later, no entities at all exist essentially, how could time be posited as existing essentially based upon them? It could not!

1.3 The way to set out the three temporal periods conventionally

Here the three temporal periods are posited according to the *Commentary on the Catuḥśataka* as follows:

> The future is that which has not yet come to be in the present. The past is that which is gone by in the present. The present is that which has arisen but has not ceased. Since the present is now being perceived, it is most important. But positing the two temporal periods—the future and the past, that which has not yet come to presence, and that which passed out of presence—is not as important. [*dBu ma* ya 171b]

[341] That temporal period on the basis of which that which is yet to come to it—the future—and on the basis of which that which has passed from it—the past—are posited is the present. Therefore, the present is the most important temporal period, and the two that are posited on the basis of it are less important. That which has not yet come into presence is like the sky or the horns of a rabbit.

In order to exclude those things being the future it is said in the *Abhidharma* that the future is that which is not yet arisen although it has a cause, just as, for example, although the cause of a sprout exists, the sprout which has yet to arise as a sprout or which not come into presence is in the future. But that which has not come into presence and which never has a cause for arising or coming into presence is not the future. So "yet to come": Where it is yet to come is to the present.[5] That which is yet to come includes such things as the sprout as effect. But the effects are not posited in the temporal period of the future.

5. *Ma 'ongs pa* and *anāgāt* : both mean both *future* and *yet to come*. Tsong khapa is focusing on the latter, root meaning.

In this context, since both future effects and their causes have not yet disintegrated after performing their functions, the *Madhyāntavibhāga* [*Madhyāntavibhāga-bhāṣya, Sems tsam* bi 14b] and other texts [Sthiramati's *Madhyānta-vibhāga-bhāṣya-ṭikkā, Sems tsam* bi 266a] describe cause and effects both as not yet having been spent. If the past were posited merely as that which is not present, such as the sky, the future would be also be past. So that which has gone by in the present is disintegrated in the present.

The past is also said to be that which has come into existence and then ceased. For example, when a disintegrated sprout is posited as past, that which is said to have come into existence is not referred to as past, but it refers to the sprout which is past. When the sprout is past, both the effect—the sprout—and its cause have performed their respective functions and have disintegrated. Therefore, both cause and effect are said to have been spent.

The present is the temporal period in which such things as the sprout have arisen, but have not yet ceased. At that time while its cause has ceased, it itself—the effect—has not yet ceased. Therefore, it is said that the cause is spent, but the effect is not yet spent. So the disintegrated sprout is the past state of the sprout; the sprout which is not yet arisen is the future state **[342]** of the sprout; the sprout which has come into existence but which has not disintegrated is the present state of the sprout. Therefore the three temporal periods are taken to be the state of disintegration, the state of not having arisen, and the state of having arisen but not having disintegrated of such entities as the sprout, respectively.

But that which does not exist in the present when the agent is using temporal language is not therefore said to be nonpresent, because that is a present only in relation to the speaker. So, having asserted that the cause is earlier and that the effect is later, and that the past is the disintegration and that the future is that which is yet to arise, to also assert that the earlier moments are the past and that the later moments are the future would be foolish.

The Vaibhāśikas posit the three temporal periods in relation to each thing, such as the sprout. Therefore, they say that the future sprout as well as the sprout that existed in the past exist as the sprout. They say the same thing about other things.

In this context, Dharmatrāta [*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya V, mNgon pa* ku 239b] asserts that when things such as the sprout pass from the future to the present and from the present to the past, they give up being future entities and give up being present entities, respectively; but they do not give up their current substance. For example, when a golden pot is destroyed and a new one is made, or when milk becomes yoghurt, the shape and taste change, respectively, but the color does not change.

Ghośak [*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya V, mNgon pa* ku 239b] actually asserts that although each temporal period has the characteristics of all three temporal periods, their respective predominance determines whether a period is past,

etc., just as a man who is more attached to some particular woman may not be free from desire for another woman.

Vasumitra [*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya V, mNgon pa* ku 240a] says that when a single thing such as a sprout passes through different states such as being future, etc., they are posited as future, etc. This is just as a single counter could stand for one or a hundred depending on the slot on a counting board in which it is placed and therefore it is posited as one and so forth. **[343]**

Buddhadeva [*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya V, mNgon pa* ku 240b] says that just as a single woman is called a mother or a daughter depending on the person to whom she is so related, a single thing, depending on whether it is related to something that is prior or posterior is posited as being in one temporal period or another.

The first of these, since it asserts that a persisting entity changes, amounts to the Sāṁkhya position. The second jumbles the characteristics of time. According to the third, since the functions of phenomena such as the sprout are asserted to be different entities from them, they would be unproduced phenomena. If they were the same entity, there would not be separate states of performing their functions and not performing their functions. According to the fourth, one would have to say each of the temporal periods, such as the past, comprises all three temporal periods—prior, posterior, and middle. It would follow that each of the temporal periods would comprise three temporal periods.

Moreover, according to the *Abhidharmakośa* and its autocommentary the refutation is as follows: If things such as sprouts existed inherently in temporal periods such as the past and the future, then how could there be such things as the disintegrated sprout and the sprout which is yet to be arisen [*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya V, mNgon pa* ku 241a]? The characteristics of the three temporal periods are asserted to be as they have been explained earlier: the disintegrated and the as yet non-arisen—the past and the future—are asserted not to be things. This is asserted by all Buddhist schools from Sautrāntika onward, apart from the prāsaṅgika-mādhyamikas.

The prāsaṅgika-mādhyamikas maintain that all three temporal periods are things. As it has been proven in the seventh chapter, the two temporal periods in which something has disintegrated and in which it has yet to arise are things. However, since it is not maintained that each thing such as a sprout has three temporal stages, this is different from the Vaibhāṣika view.

The three temporal periods according to this system are as follows: Consider a sprout. The sprout is present. Its disintegration is its past. Although in general there are causes, in certain circumstances, without the complete assemblage of causes and conditions, the sprout is not yet arisen, and that is its future.

On the other hand one might argue as follows: Since it has been asserted that the disintegration of the disintegrated sprout constitutes a homogeneous

continuum, and since the moment when it has arisen and not yet ceased is its present, **[344]** it would follow that being present and being disintegrated are not mutually exclusive.

We commit no such error, because the first moment of the disintegration of the sprout is the disintegration of the *sprout*. The disintegrations of its homogeneous stages are the successive disintegrations of its previous moments. And each disintegration is a past. At the time when the *disintegration* of the sprout exists, *it* is not disintegrated; but in general, since it is a disintegration it is, as such, in the past.

So, the homogeneous continuum of anything in the past must be posited as an entity itself on the grounds of the disintegration of a different thing. Therefore, there is a major difference between the past and the other two temporal periods. Similarly, any homogeneous continuum in the future must be posited as an entity itself just on the basis of some other thing not yet being arisen. Thus there is a major difference between the future and the other two temporal periods. So as far as the present is concerned, it is like an arisen but not yet ceased sprout, which neither needs to be posited on the basis of the disintegration of some other thing, nor on the basis of some other thing not yet arisen. Therefore there is a major difference between it and future moments that are neither arisen nor ceased.

2. Confirmation through Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that the presentation of the three temporal periods as empty of existence through their own characteristics is corroborated by profound scriptures and to demonstrate that all of the sūtras that state that the three temporal periods are essenceless are explained by this chapter. The *Hastikakṣya-sūtra* says,

> If there were any essence in phenomena,[6]
> The Victors and their disciples would have realized it.
> Immutable phenomena do not attain nirvana.
> Even the wise are not without fabrication.[7] [*mDo sde* da 251b]

And the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says,

> Even though hundreds of thousands of teachings have been taught.
> And hundreds of thousands of buddhas have come and gone,

6. The Sanskrit here read, *nirvana*, not *dharma*.
7. The attribution is incorrect. This quotation is from the *Tathāgatajñānamudrāsamādhi-sūtra*.

> The teachings and the words are inexhaustible.
> There is no arising, and so no exhaustion, [*mDo de* da 147a] **[345]**

and

> When the Tathāgata arrives and
> A Victor named Maitreya also arrives,
> The Earth will be covered with gold.
> At that time, where is the arrival? [*Vīradatta-sūtra, dKon brtsegs* ca 201a]

This shows that time is essenceless by refuting the exhaustion of the time of the Buddha's earlier coming and passing and by refuting the inherent existence of the time of the Buddha's later arrival.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

It is not at all possible for the three temporal periods to exist through their own characteristics: neither that which has arisen earlier and ceased, nor that which has not yet arisen; nor that which has arisen, earlier and not yet ceased. Nonetheless, one should confirm one's ascertainment of the two truths through thinking that it is absolutely tenable that they are essenceless—that is, empty of their own characteristics.

This is the commentary on the nineteenth chapter, having six verses, called "the examination of time."

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CHAPTER XX

Examination of Assemblage

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of arising from the assemblage of causes and conditions
    1.1.1 Refutation of arising from a previous assemblage
      1.1.1.1 Refutation of arising directly from the assemblage
        1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of the arising of existents and nonexistents in the assemblage
        1.1.1.1.2 Refutation of the existence and nonexistence of the assemblage itself
      1.1.1.2 Refutation of arising indirectly from the assemblage
    1.1.2 Refutation of arising from a simultaneous assemblage
    1.1.3 Refutation of arising from a subsequent assemblage
  1.2 Refutation of arising just from causation
    1.2.1 Refutation of the position that cause and effect have the same nature
    1.2.2 Refutation of the position that cause and effect have different natures
      1.2.2.1 Refutation of the cause providing the action of giving rise to the effect
        1.2.2.1.1 Refutation of both a ceased and an enduring cause giving rise to the effect
        1.2.2.1.2 Refutation of the cause giving rise to an effect by seeing or not seeing
        1.2.2.1.3 Refutation of a cause giving rise to an effect through contact or without contact

1.2.2.1.4 Refutation of a cause that is empty or nonempty of the effect giving rise to an effect
1.2.2.1.5 Refutation of the cause giving rise to an empty or a nonempty effect
1.2.2.1.6 Refutation of a cause giving rise to an effect that is essentially identical or different
1.2.2.1.7 Refutation of a cause giving rise to an inherently existent or an inherently nonexistent effect
1.2.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of causality
1.3 Presentation of further reasons for the refutation of arising through the assemblage of causes and conditions
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the fourth section of the extensive explanation of selflessness—the presentation of the essential emptiness of time. We have completed the first of its two parts: the refutation of the inherent existence of time. **[345:11]** We now begin the second part: the refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of time. This section has two parts: the refutation of time as the supporting condition of the arising of the effect and the refutation of time as the cause of the arising and cessation of the effect. This chapter constitutes the first of those two parts. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here someone might say, "Time exists essentially because it is the supporting condition of the arising of effects. Although conditions such as the seed, the soil, and the water are assembled, until the right moment occurs, the effect does not arise; when the right moment occurs, it does arise; just as it is in the case of external phenomena, so it is for internal phenomena as the Buddha says:

> When the assemblage is complete, and the time is right
> The fruit will ripen. [*Vinaya, kṣudra-varga, Phran tshegs* ta 153a, 156a, 157a, and *Vinaya Vibhanga, 'Dul ba* cha 177a]

So it is said that the arising of the effect depends on time." The refutation of this has three parts: the refutation of arising from the assemblage of causes and conditions, the refutation of arising just from causation, and the presentation of further reasons for the refutation of arising from the assemblage of causes and conditions.

1.1 Refutation of arising from the assemblage of causes and conditions

[346] This section has three parts: the refutation of arising from a previous assemblage, the refutation of arising from a simultaneous assemblage, and the refutation of arising from a subsequent assemblage.

1.1.1 Refutation of arising from a previous assemblage

This section has two parts: the refutation of arising directly from the assemblage and the refutation of arising indirectly from the assemblage.

1.1.1.1 Refutation of arising directly from the assemblage

This section has two parts: the refutation of the arising of existents and nonexistents in the assemblage and the refutation of the existence and nonexistence of the assemblage itself.

1.1.1.1.1 Refutation of the arising of existents and nonexistents in the assemblage

1. If, arising from the assemblage of
Causes and conditions,
The effect is in the assemblage,
How could it arise from the assemblage?

If a sprout arises from an assemblage of causes and conditions, including such things as the seed, does the effect arise existing essentially in the assemblage, or does it arise without existing essentially in them? If the effect were to arise essentially from the assemblage of causes and conditions, and if the effect existed in the assemblage of causes and conditions, then how could the effect arise essentially from the assemblage of causes and conditions itself? It could not, because it would be the basis, and the effect must depend upon it. For example, the bowl containing the yoghurt does not give rise to the yoghurt. Moreover, that which exists has already come into existence, like that pot over there, which does not depend on a further arising.

Now, suppose one said that although the essence of the effect is in the causes and conditions, because it must be made manifest by the conditions, there is still a point in its arising.

> 2. If, arising from the assemblage of
> Causes and conditions,
> The effect is not in the assemblage,
> How could it arise from the assemblage?

If it were already manifest, it would not have to arise again. If it were not, this would be the position according to which that which does not exist previously arises. If the effect arises from the assemblage of causes and conditions and the effect does not exist just in the assemblage, how could the effect arise essentially just from the assemblage? It could not, because, being nonexistent there, it would be like tahini coming from sand. To summarize, if the effect exists essentially, it does not need to arise; if it is not in the assemblage, it cannot arise essentially.

1.1.1.1.2 Refutation of the existence and nonexistence of the assemblage itself

> 3. If the effect were in the assemblage
> Of causes and conditions,
> Then it should be found in the assemblage.
> But it is not found in the assemblage.

Moreover, if the effect existed in virtue of being based in the assemblage of causes and conditions, **[347]** it would have to be the case that it could be found in the assemblage by one of the four kinds of authoritative cognition. But it is not found in the assemblage itself by authoritative cognition, in the same way that yoghurt is seen in the bowl. That which is not in something does not arise from it just as oil does not arise from sand. But one might think about it like this: The effect does arise from the assemblage because the arising of the effect from the assemblage is established by inference. But in that case, why don't you accept the inference—that which exists in something else cannot arise from it essentially, just as nothing like yoghurt arises from a bowl—establishes that the effect does not exist in the assemblage?

Or one might think about it like this: Since accepting the inference is inconsistent with both positions, just as it makes no sense to say that the effect exists in the assemblage, it makes no sense either to say that the effect is not in the assemblage. We do not argue that the effect is essentially nonexistent in the assemblage of causes and conditions, but we refute the essential existence of the effect in the assemblage as it is fabricated by others. Similarly, we do not argue that the effect exists essentially in the assemblage, but we refute the essential nonexistence of the effect in them as imagined by others, because we

aspire to establish the middle path through the elimination of the two extremes of existence and nonexistence.

4. If the effect were not in the assemblage
Of causes and conditions,
Then it would be as though causes and conditions
Were not causes and conditions.

If the effect did not exist in the assemblage of causes and conditions, then it would be as though the causes and conditions of the sprout were not causes and conditions, just like fire and charcoal. This is because if they were similar in that they do not have those effects, they would also be similar with respect to whether they inherently exist or do not exist either as the causes and conditions of the sprout or not.

1.1.1.2 Refutation of arising indirectly from the assemblage

Suppose one argued as follows: According to the argument through which we conducted the analysis asking whether or not the effect exists in the assemblage, the assemblage of causes and conditions does not have the power to give rise directly to the causes and conditions. However, the assemblage of conditions merely assists the direct cause, **[348]** and that cause in order to give rise to the effect provides causal power to the effect and then ceases. With the assistance of that causation that has been provided, the effect arises.

5. If the cause ceases,
Having provided causation to the effect,
There would be two kinds of cause:
The causation that has been provided and the cause that has ceased.

If the cause ceases after having provided facilitative causation to the effect, then it would follow that the facilitative causation that has been provided to the effect and the cause that has ceased would be two substantially distinct causes. That would not make any sense, because the provided causation endures after it has arisen, and so would be permanent, and the ceased cause would be impermanent, and it would be contradictory for a single cause to be both permanent and impermanent.

6. If the cause, not yet having
Provided causation to its effect, ceased,
Then, having arisen from a ceased cause,
The effect would causeless.

Suppose that in order to rebut the charge that a single cause would have to be two substantially different entities, someone gave the following argument:

The cause, without providing facilitative causation to the effect, completely ceases prior to the occurrence of the effect. It would follow from this that an effect such as a sprout which has arisen after the cessation of a cause such as a seed would not have arisen directly from the seed. Therefore it would be causeless.

Suppose someone asks how this analysis is supposed to go, where one contrasts the complete cessation of the seed prior to the existence of the sprout with its having either of two aspects—one ceased and the other unceased. According to those for whom cessation exists through its own characteristic, prior to the existence of the sprout, when the seed is about to cease, it would have to have already completed its activity of cessation. This is because the cessation is the property of that entity which is to cease. And a property of an essentially existent entity is inextricable from it, because this is just like the case of maintaining that something is truly arisen; in that case when it is about to arise, that which is to arise must already exist.

1.1.2 Refutation of arising from a simultaneous assemblage

Now, suppose someone argued as follows: Since we have seen that it is erroneous to say that an effect arises from a cause *prior* to it, only an assemblage of causes and conditions *simultaneous* with the effect can give rise to it. For example, **[349]** the lamp, which is simultaneous with the light, gives rise to it.

7. If the effect were to arise
Simultaneously with the assemblage,
Then the producer and the produced
Would be simultaneous.

If the effect arose simultaneously with the assemblage of causes and conditions the absurd consequence would follow that the cause that gives rise to it—the producer—would be simultaneous with the effect to which it gives rise—the produced. This makes no sense, as the right and left horn of a cow cannot be producer and produced.

1.1.3 Refutation of arising through a subsequent assemblage

According to the Vaibhāṣikas, entities do not arise from things that do not exist prior to them. Otherwise, the absurd consequence would follow that they would arise at random without any cause. Therefore, prior to the existence of the assemblage of causes and conditions, the effect exists in the *future*. The assemblage of causes and conditions gives rise to its existence in the *present*. But

these substances are said to exist both before and after [*Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya V, mNgon pa* ku 239a].

> 8. If the effect were to be arisen
> Prior to the assemblage,
> Then, without causes and conditions,
> The effect would have arisen causelessly.

If the effect were already arisen prior to the assemblage of causes and conditions—that is, had already come into existence—it would follow that that effect would be independent of causes and conditions. In that case it would arise without its cause.

1.2 Refutation of arising just from causation

This section has two parts: the refutation of the position that cause and effect have the same nature and the refutation of the position that cause and effect have different natures.

1.2.1 Refutation of the position that cause and effect have the same nature

Some say that the effect is given rise to simply by the cause, but not by the assemblage of causes and conditions, and that no error is committed whether or not one says that facilitative causation is provided to the effect. This is because they say that, having ceased, the cause itself persists in the form of the effect.

> 9. If, the cause, having ceased,
> Passed completely into the effect,
> Then a previously arisen cause
> Would, absurdly, arise again.

When the cause ceases, the effect arises. Some might think that it has the nature of the cause itself: Just as an actor sheds one costume and puts on another, the cause just keeps passing on and does not give rise to any previously nonexistent effect. In that case, the cause would be permanent. But this does not make any sense because there are no permanent things. **[350]** Moreover, the absurd consequence would follow that a previously arisen cause would arise again because it would arise first when the cause occurs and then later when the effect occurs. This would not make any sense either, because it would not need to arise, and there would be an infinite regress of arising.

1.2.2 Refutation of the position that cause and effect have different natures

This section has two parts: the refutation of the cause providing the action of giving rise to the effect and the refutation of the essential existence of causality.

1.2.2.1 Refutation of the cause providing the action of giving rise to the effect

This section has seven parts: refutation of both a ceased and an enduring cause giving rise to the effect; the refutation of the cause giving rise to an effect by seeing or not seeing; the refutation of a cause giving rise to an effect through contact or without contact; the refutation of a cause that is empty or nonempty of the effect giving rise to an effect; the refutation of a cause giving rise to an empty or nonempty effect; the refutation of a cause giving rise to an effect that is essentially identical or different; the refutation of a cause giving rise to an inherently existent or an inherently nonexistent effect.

1.2.2.1.1 Refutation of both a ceased and an enduring cause giving rise to the effect

Moreover, if the cause gives rise to the effect essentially, does the cause give rise to the effect having ceased or not having ceased prior to the occurrence of the effect? And does it give rise to an effect that has already arisen or to one that is as yet non-arisen?

> 10. How can a cause, having ceased and dissolved,
> Give rise to an arisen effect?
> How can an enduring cause related to its effect
> Give rise to it?

In the first case how could a cause that has ceased or dissolved—that is, disintegrated—give rise to an arisen effect? It could not, because at the time when the cause has ceased, the cause no longer exists, and it is not tenable that a nonexistent thing can be a cause; and an already arisen effect does not need to arise again.

In the second case, how could an enduring cause related to its effect—that is, one that has not disintegrated—essentially give rise to the effect? It could not, because if a cause that is non-ceased and essentially existent gave rise to an effect, then it would have to be the case that the effect would occur

without any transformation of the cause. But this does not make any sense because, as *Catuḥśataka* says,

> When the cause transforms
> It becomes the cause of another. [IX: 9ab]

When the effect has arisen, the cause must have transformed. **[351]**

One might think that since an already existent effect does not need to be given rise to, at the time when the cause exists it gives rise to an effect to which it is not related.

> 11. Moreover, if an effect is not related to its cause,
> How can it be given rise to?

But the cause cannot essentially give rise to such an effect, because if it gave rise to the effect essentially, then the effect would have to be related to the cause even when it is simultaneous with the cause. Suppose it were not related to it. For that which exists through its own characteristic there cannot be any relation at all. If such an unrelated cause gave rise to an effect, a single cause could give rise to every conceivable effect or it would not give rise to any effect.

1.2.2.1.2 Refutation of the cause giving rise to an effect by seeing or not seeing.

Moreover, if a cause gives rise to an effect essentially, does it do so by seeing it or by not seeing it?

> 11cd. The cause gives rise to the effect
> Neither by seeing it nor by not seeing it.

To consider the first case, the cause does not give rise to its effect by seeing it, because if it did see it, since the effect would already exist there would be no need for it to arise again. Nor does the cause essentially give rise to its effect without seeing it, because if it did, then a single cause could give rise to any conceivable effect.

What is it to see in this sense? It is to perceive, just as it is for ordinary people. Suppose someone asked, "Is it not impossible for such as things as seeds to have sense faculties?" We are not the ones with whom to argue about whether this is possible or impossible. Instead, argue with those who assert that effects arise essentially! They say that such things as seeds give rise to their effects having seen them! However, one should say to them that no ordinary person sees that causes see their effects! If one were to say that they

give rise to their effects essentially, without seeing them, then what we said above still applies.

When these absurd consequences are presented to those who say that a supreme being[1] is the cause—those who say that there is a creator who intentionally creates beings, and those Jains who say that such things as seeds have a single sense faculty and a mind—there is no way for them to rebut them. **[352]** Therefore, we commit no error.

In *Prajñāpradīpa,* this passage is applied to the refutation of a specific case of causality: When such things as eyes give rise to their own sensory consciousness, do they do so by seeing their objects, such as material form, or by not seeing them [200a]?

1.2.2.1.3 Refutation of a cause giving rise to an effect through contact or without contact

> 12. There is never simultaneous contact
> Of a past effect
> With a past, non-arisen,
> Or arisen cause.

Moreover, if the cause gives rise to the effect essentially, these would have to make contact—that is, they would have to be simultaneous. This is because pairs such as light and darkness or samsara and nirvana, which are not like this, are not regarded as producer and produced. When contact is examined by the rational mind this is not found in any of the three temporal periods. In this connection, any past effect, such as a sprout, is never in contact with a past cause such as a seed, because when they are disintegrated, they do not exist and, although the disintegrated seed and the sprout may have come into contact, there is no contact between the seed and the sprout as cause and effect.

Similarly, a past effect does not come into contact with an unarisen cause—that is, one that is yet to come—because neither the disintegrated effect nor the unarisen cause exists, and the two temporal periods are distinct. A past effect does not come into simultaneous contact with a cause in the present because they exist in distinct temporal periods and because the disintegrated effect, just like the son of a barren woman, cannot be in simultaneous contact with Lhejin.

> 13. There is never simultaneous contact
> Of an arisen effect

1. This is a reference to any doctrine according to which a supreme being (*skye bu/puruṣa*) is the fundamental causal principle in the universe.

With a non-arisen, past,
Or arisen cause.

The arisen effect—that is, one that is in the present—can never inherently come into simultaneous contact with its nonarisen cause—that is, one which is yet to come—nor with the past cause nor with an arisen cause—that is, a present one. This is because the past cause and that which is yet to come are in two distinct temporal periods, and if the present cause and effect contacted each other essentially, it would not be possible for them to be sequential; rather, they would have to be simultaneous, and that cannot be, **[353]** and because, even though one might think that an effect that has already arisen must come into contact with a cause in order for the cause to give rise to it, in fact that is not necessary.

14. There is never simultaneous contact
Of a non-arisen effect
With an arisen, non-arisen,
Or a past cause.

A non-arisen effect—that is, one that has yet to come—can never essentially come into simultaneous contact with a cause that has presently arisen, or an unarisen future cause, or a past cause. This is because the past cause and that which is in the present exist at distinct times and because neither the cause nor the effect in the future exist.

15. Without contact,
How can a cause produce an effect?
Even where there is contact,
How can a cause produce an effect?

Thus given this analysis of cause and effect, since contact does not exist essentially, how can a cause give rise to an effect? It cannot! On the other hand, even if cause and effect came into contact essentially, how could the cause essentially give rise to the effect? It could not! This is because if the effect were not simultaneous with it, it would not be tenable for them to be in contact, but if they were simultaneous there would be no point for the effect to arise again.

1.2.2.1.4 Refutation of a cause that is empty or nonempty of the effect giving rise to an effect

16. If a cause is empty of an effect,
How can it produce an effect?
If a cause is not empty of an effect,
How can it produce an effect?

Moreover, how could a cause that is empty of the effect give rise essentially to the effect? It could not, because even though water and curd are similar in the respect that they are each empty of butter, butter does come from curd but not from water, and this distinction could not be drawn. If, on the other hand, the cause were not empty of its effect, how could it give rise essentially to the effect? It could not, because an existent effect does not arise again, just as it is when Lhejin has a son.

1.2.2.1.5 Refutation of the cause giving rise to an empty or nonempty effect

Is that effect that arises empty of essential existence or not empty of essential existence?

> 17. A nonempty effect does not arise.
> The nonempty would not cease.
> This nonempty would be
> The non-ceased and the non-arisen.

An effect that is not empty of essential existence would not arise—that is, not being dependently originated, it would be essentially existent. Since such a nonempty thing could not lose its essence, it would be unceasing. Therefore, if you maintain that this effect is not empty **[354]** it would be unceasing and unarisen; but you do not want to maintain this!

> 18. How can the empty arise?
> How can the empty cease?
> The empty would hence also, absurdly,
> Be the non-ceased and the non-arisen.

How could an effect that is empty of essential existence arise inherently? And how could it inherently cease? It could not, just like space. Therefore, even if you maintain that the effect is empty of essential existence, the absurd consequence would follow that it is unceasing and unarisen, and you do not want to accept this either!

1.2.2.1.6 Refutation of a cause giving rise to an effect that is essentially identical or different

> 19. The identity of cause and effect
> Is never tenable.

The difference of cause and effect
Is never tenable.

Moreover, if the cause gave rise to the effect essentially, you could not escape two alternatives. Here the author just asserts the thesis that it is not tenable for these two—the cause and effect—to be essentially identical; nor is it tenable for these two—the cause and effect—to be essentially different. The argument for this thesis is as follows:

20. If cause and effect were identical,
Produced and producer would be identical.
If cause and effect were different,
Cause and noncause would be alike.

If the two—the cause and the effect—were essentially identical, then produced things such as a son, visual consciousness, and a sprout would be identical to their respective producers such as the father, the eye, and the seed. If these two—the cause and effect—were essentially different, then, given that they would be different through their own characteristics, they would not be dependent. Therefore, a cause and non-cause could each just as easily be a cause or a non-cause, because you could not draw a distinction between unrelated entities being and not being cause and effect.

1.2.2.1.7 Refutation of a cause giving rise to an inherently existent or an inherently nonexistent effect

Moreover, if the cause gives rise to the effect, then we must inquire as to whether it gives rise to an inherently existent or an inherently nonexistent effect.

21. If an effect is inherently existent,
To what could a cause have given rise?
If an effect is inherently nonexistent,
To what could a cause have given rise?

If an effect is inherently existent, to what could a cause have given rise? There is nothing to which it could have, because if it gave rise to such a thing, it would have to have given rise to something that already exists. But that which already exists does not need to arise again. If, on the other hand, the effect were inherently nonexistent, to what could a cause have given rise? There is nothing to which it could have.

Suppose one said that although a reflection does not exist essentially, it is given rise to by a cause and therefore that there is no such entailment. The example is all right, **[355]** but it would also establish that all things are essenceless. Therefore, by relinquishing the assertion that that things are es-

sentially existent, you would follow us in asserting that all causes and effects are essenceless.

There is no essential existence at all. So, since its contrary does not exist, there is no essential nonexistence. How is it that there is no entailment? On our own view, since characterized phenomena such as a reflection lack essential existence, their characteristics also lack inherent existence. Therefore we do not assert that they exist inherently, either as essentially existent or as essentially nonexistent.

Previously, we have refuted the arising of an empty or nonempty effect by focusing on the effect. Now the refutation of arising of an effect that does or does not exist inherently will focus on the cause. Therefore it will not be redundant.

1.2.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of causality

Now, someone might argue as follows: Although you have refuted the cause providing the action that gives rise to the effect, the cause exists essentially because you have not refuted that. Therefore, the effect also exists essentially.

22. If something is not giving rise to an effect,
It is not tenable to attribute causality.
If it is not tenable to attribute causality,
Then of what will the effect be an effect?

Since the cause does not give rise to the effect essentially, it is not tenable that causality exists essentially. Suppose someone thought that although we have refuted the essential existence of the cause, the effect must have essential existence, and therefore that the cause also must exist essentially. Since it is not tenable that causality exists essentially, of what cause would the essentially existent effect be an effect? There would not be any!

1.3 Presentation of further reasons for the refutation of arising through the assemblage of causes and conditions

Suppose someone said that while the cause *alone* is not the active agent of giving rise to the effect, the entire *assemblage* of causes and conditions *does* give rise to the effect. This makes no sense, because it has already been previously refuted.

23. If the assemblage
Of causes and conditions
Does not give rise to itself,
How does it give rise to an effect?

Moreover, suppose you thought of it that way. Then does that which is the assemblage of causes and conditions produce itself or not? The assemblage cannot give rise to itself because there would be no point in its arising as an effect, **[356]** and reflexive action is inconsistent.

Moreover, since the assemblage does not substantially exist, it cannot inherently exist as an active agent of giving rise to effects. Therefore, since it is not substantially existent, it cannot give rise to itself. Thus how could this assemblage essentially give rise to an effect? It could not do so, just like the son of a barren woman. The assemblage cannot inherently give rise to itself or to anything else. Therefore, that created by—that is, that which is given rise to by—the assemblage of causes and conditions cannot exist inherently.

Buddhapālita explains that the meaning of the assemblage not giving rise to itself is that the assemblage does not exist inherently [255a].

Now suppose someone argued as follows: Even though there is no effect created by the assemblage of causes and conditions, there is an effect created by something that is not an assemblage of causes and conditions.

> 24. Therefore, there is no effect, either
> Created by an assemblage,
> Or by something that is not an assemblage.
> If there is no effect, where can there be an assemblage of conditions?

Since there is no effect that is given rise to essentially by the assemblage of causes and conditions, its diametrical opposite, an effect that is created by something that is not an assemblage of causes and conditions, cannot exist either.

Suppose someone said that even though the effect lacks inherent existence, the assemblage of causes and conditions exists inherently and therefore that the effect must exist inherently. Following the analysis presented in the arguments above, if the effect does not exist essentially, how could the assemblage of causes and conditions exist essentially? It could not!

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that the demonstration that the arising of the effect from the assemblage of causes and conditions, whether jointly or severally, does not exist inherently can also be corroborated by profound scriptures and to demonstrate that all of the sūtras that address this issue are explained by this chapter. The *Lalitavistara-sūtra* says,

> Depending on lips, larynx, and palate,
> Through the movement of the tongue, speech sounds arise.

However, it does not arise from the larynx and palate.
Words are not perceived to come from them individually. **[357]**

Depending on the assemblage,
Speech is arisen through the power of the introspective consciousness,
However,[2] mind and speech are not observed, and there is no material form
Because they can be seen neither internally nor externally.

The wise person, upon analyzing the arising and ceasing
Of speech, words, and sound
Sees all speech as like an echo,
Momentary and without substance. [*mDo sde* kha 89b–90a]

This means that the sound of speech arises depending upon causes and conditions, and upon analysis is said to be essenceless, and such arising also occurs through the power of the mind.

This is similar to "This beautiful doctrine" *Upālipariprcchā-sūtra* [*dKon brtsegs* Ca 130c] quoted earlier.[3] The *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāramitā-sūtra* says "Oh, Kouśika, the great Bodhisattva who is clad in great armor should not hold to material form," and thereafter it says, "Nor should one hold to the remaining four aggregates and the four fruits and pratyekabuddhas or the fully enlightened buddhas" [*Sher phyin* ka 20a]

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

In the *Buddhapālita* it says,

> "If neither time nor cause and effect nor their assemblage exist, what else could exist?" is an assertion of nihilism. But we respond: This is not the case, because the way you have conceptually constructed such things as time as inherently existent is simply not tenable; instead they exist as dependent designations. [255b]

One should thus understand that while the inherent existence of cause and effect and the assemblage of causes and conditions maintained by the reificationists is refuted, the existence of dependently originated phenomena, originated in dependence on causes and conditions, is not refuted.

This is the commentary on the twentieth chapter, having twenty-four verses, called the examination of assemblage.

2. Reading *mod* for *med,* following the sDe dege, the Sanskrit and the sense of the commentary. The Tashi Lhunpo and Lhasa editions appear to reflect an early scribal error.

3. See chapter VII, page 190.

CHAPTER XXI

Examination of Becoming and Destruction

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of arising and destruction
    1.1.1 Refutation of the conclusion that becoming and destruction exist essentially
      1.1.1.1 Refutation through examination of whether or not becoming and destruction are simultaneous
        1.1.1.1.1 Asserting the conclusion
        1.1.1.1.2 Presenting the argument
          1.1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of destruction being and not being simultaneous with becoming
          1.1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of becoming being and not being simultaneous with destruction
        1.1.1.1.3 Summary of these refutations
      1.1.1.2 Refutation through analysis to determine on what basis becoming and destruction could exist
        1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of becoming and destruction whether or not the basis is exhausted
        1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of becoming and destruction based on things
        1.1.1.2.3 Refutation of becoming and destruction whether or not the basis is empty
      1.1.1.3 Refutation through examination of whether becoming and destruction are identical or different
    1.1.2 Refutation of the argument that becoming and destruction exist essentially

1.1.2.1 Showing that that they are observed is not an argument for the claim
1.1.2.2 Presentation of an argument for that claim
1.1.2.2.1 Refutation of becoming and destruction arising from that which is of a homogeneous or heterogeneous kind
1.1.2.2.2 Refutation of things arising from self or other
1.2 Showing that the errors of nihilism and reification follow from maintaining the essential existence of arising and destruction
1.2.1 How reification and nihilism follow from asserting that things exist essentially
1.2.2 Refuting the rebuttal while still maintaining these assertions
1.2.2.1 The way reification and nihilism are rebutted while maintaining that things exist essentially
1.2.2.2 Its refutation
1.2.2.2.1 Showing that even though they accept a continuum, they cannot avoid reification and nihilism
1.2.2.2.2 Showing that the continuum itself does not exist essentially
1.2.3 Summary of the point of that refutation
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the fourth section of the extensive presentation of selflessness—the presentation of the essential emptiness of time—and we are still in its second part—the refutation of the argument for the inherent existence of time. We have completed the first of the two sections of that part: the refutation of time as the supporting condition of the arising of the effect. **[357:20]** This chapter constitutes the second of those two parts: the refutation of time as the cause of the arising and cessation of the effect. **[358]** It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here someone might say that time does exist essentially because it is the cause of the becoming and cessation of effects. This is because depending on time, such as winter, sprouts disintegrate, and depending on time, such as spring, they arise.

If becoming and destruction existed inherently, then time, as the cause of becoming and destruction, would exist essentially. But that it not the case.

This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of arising and destruction and showing that the errors of nihilism and reification follow from maintaining the essential existence of arising and destruction.

1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of arising and destruction

This section has two parts: the refutation of the conclusion that becoming and destruction exist essentially and the refutation of the argument that becoming and destruction exist essentially.

1.1.1 Refutation of the conclusion that becoming and destruction exist essentially

This section has three parts: the refutation through examination of whether or not becoming and destruction are simultaneous, the refutation through analysis to determine on what basis becoming and destruction could exist, and the refutation through examination of whether becoming and destruction are identical or different.

1.1.1.1 Refutation through examination of whether or not becoming and destruction are simultaneous

This section has three parts: asserting the conclusion, presenting the argument, and the summary of these refutations.

1.1.1.1.1 Asserting the conclusion

1. Destruction does not occur without becoming.
It does not occur simultaneously with it.
Becoming does not occur without destruction.
It does not occur simultaneously with it.

Suppose becoming and destruction existed essentially. There are four conclusions: there is no destruction without becoming—that is, arising; destruction could not be essentially simultaneous with becoming; there is no becoming without destruction; nor could becoming be essentially simultaneous with destruction.

1.1.1.1.2 Presenting the argument

This section has two parts: the refutation of destruction being and not being simultaneous with becoming and the refutation of becoming being and not being simultaneous with destruction.

1.1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of destruction being and not being simultaneous with becoming

2. How could there be destruction
Without becoming?
There would be death without birth.
There is no destruction without becoming.

There is no destruction without becoming—that is, arising. The phrase "how could" means that it is absolutely not possible. If there were, without arising—that is, without being born—one could die. But this is never observed. **[359]** Therefore it is impossible for there to be destruction without becoming.

3. How could destruction
Occur simultaneously with becoming?
Death does not occur
Simultaneously with birth.

How could the destruction of things be essentially simultaneous with—that is, occur at the same time as—their becoming? It could not, because if it were, death would essentially occur at the same time as birth. But that is not the case, because they are mutually inconsistent, just like light and darkness. The respect in which they are mutually inconsistent has been explained previously in the eleventh chapter. Alternatively, in the case of a sprout, the two temporal periods of its arising and cessation are like light and darkness.

According to those for whom arising and cessation exist through their own characteristics, the cessation of the sprout is the characteristic of the sprout; and the sprout is the characterized. In that case, there could not be any alteration in its nature. Therefore, it would have to be that way all the time. So, if arising and cessation were simultaneous, the arising and the ceased would also be simultaneous. The remaining analyses of cessation have been explained in the context of the seventh chapter and so are not explained here.

Here in response to some śrāvakas who assert that cessation has a cause, because it is the characteristic of produced phenomena just like arising, *Prajñāpradīpa* says that two errors are committed: One is a failure of entailment in the premise. Since although the cessation of all things—such as consciousness, sound, the final flicker of a flame, or the final mental event of an arhat—is the characteristic of produced phenomena, it has no cause, there is no entailment [205a].

Prasannapadā says that their cessation is also conditioned by their arising. Therefore, they have causes; and the cessation of such things as the final moment of consciousness must also be established as not existing causelessly, in

the same way that cessation in general must be established. Therefore there is no failure of entailment [134b].

As explained before, disintegration is here regarded as destruction, **[360]** and this is also the way the great Candrakīrti views it, regarding it as a thing. In *Prajñāpradīpa,* it says, just after the previous discussion, that that which has already disintegrated and which no longer exists does not have a cause, because it is nonexistent, just like something completely nonexistent. This is because in his system, disintegration is not regarded as a thing. Therefore, the statement that even though disintegration is a characteristic of produced phenomena, it does not have a cause is in accordance with the opponents' assertions, and not with our own system [205a].

The reason why the example to which the phrase "just like arising" refers is unestablished[1] is explained as follows: To arise is to attain the status of having come into existence from that which previously had come into existence. This means that the arising that is regarded as the characteristic of produced things is maintained by the opponent to be substantially different from such things as pots. Since such arising does not exist, arising is not established as having a cause.

Prajñāpradīpa uses the fact that arising does not exist substantially as a proof that the example is not established. [Ibid.] *Prasannapadā,* presenting the opponent's view, as follows: "since the arising of that which is substantially existent . . ."[134b].[2] These two positions are not contradictory, because the meaning of the former is as it has been explained above and the meaning of the latter is merely a presentation of the opponent's position that arising exists substantially. According to *Prasannapadā,* the reason for the untenability of saying that the example is not established—"you accept that such things as reflections, which do not substantially exist, have causes"[135a]—is that, although the substantial existence of arising has been refuted, it is not the case that it is not established as having a cause.

1. The example in question is one considered in *Prajñāpradīpa* [205a] in the voice of a reificationist opponent, who presents the causelessness of arising as an example to illustrate the possibility of the causelessness of cessation. What follows is Tsong khapa's explanation of Bhāvaviveka's reply to this example.

2. The reference here is too brief for clarity. The relevant passage in *Prasannapadā* reads as follows:

> The nature of the identity of any thing is to have arisen, that is, to have come into being from having not come into being. This is because even conventionally, there is no example to establish the arising of the substantially existent.

Tsong khapa's contraction of this quotation elides the crucial negation and makes it difficult to see what is going on.

1.1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of becoming being and not being simultaneous with destruction

4. How could there be becoming
Without destruction?
For things never
Lack impermanence.

How could there be becoming without destruction? There could not. If things existed that way, it would have to be possible for things to be indestructible. But things never lack impermanence. **[361]**

5. How could becoming
Be simultaneous with destruction?
Birth does not occur
Simultaneously with death.

How could becoming be essentially simultaneous with destruction? It could not, because if that were the case birth would be simultaneous with death and this is not possible. This has already been explained.

1.1.1.1.3 Summary of these refutations

6. How can those things which cannot
Be established as existing
Simultaneously or not simultaneously with each other
Exist at all?

How could the nonessentially existent becoming and destruction of those things which can be established neither as simultaneous with each other—that is, as at the same time—nor as not simultaneous with each other—that is, as not at the same time—exist essentially? It could not, because if they existed essentially, they could not escape two alternatives with respect to their mode of existence.

Suppose one thought that although they can exist essentially neither simultaneously nor nonsimultaneously, they could exist inexpressibly in these two ways and that that which exists inexpressibly exists in a mixture of these two ways. To this we respond that since these two do not antecedently exist distinctly, there is no way to mix them.

Suppose, on the other hand, that one thought that the very meaning of "inexpressible" is that the mind cannot comprehend it. But if this were the case, then just like the blueness or whiteness of the son of a barren woman,

since becoming and destruction are not essentially existent, time as their cause is not essentially existent.

1.1.1.2 Refutation through analysis to determine on what basis becoming and destruction could exist

This section has three parts: the refutation of becoming and destruction whether or not the basis is exhausted, the refutation of becoming and destruction based on things, and the refutation of becoming and destruction whether or not the basis is empty.

1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of becoming and destruction whether or not the basis is exhausted

If one were to maintain that becoming and destruction exist essentially, in which things do they exist, in those that are characterized by exhaustion or in those that are not characterized by exhaustion?

> 7. There is no becoming of that which is exhausted.
> Nor is there becoming of that which is not exhausted.
> There is no destruction of that which is exhausted.
> Nor is there destruction of that which is not exhausted.

Becoming—arising—cannot be present essentially in a thing that is characterized by exhaustion, because it would be contradictory for arising and exhaustion to be co-present in anything that exists essentially. Nor can becoming be present essentially in that which is not exhausted, because if an essentially existent thing were not exhausted, it could not have destruction as the characteristic of a thing. **[362]** Destruction cannot be present essentially in an exhausted thing, because that is the nonexistence of the object that is to cease. It would not make sense for destruction to exist essentially in such a basis. Nor can destruction be present essentially in a thing that is not exhausted for the reasons presented above.

1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of becoming and destruction based on things

Suppose someone said that becoming and destruction exist essentially because things exist essentially, and things are the bases of these two.

8. Without the existence of things,
There is neither becoming nor destruction.
Without becoming and destruction,
There is no existence of things.

Without the essential existence of things, becoming and destruction cannot exist inherently. The reason that things do not exist essentially is as follows: We have previously refuted the essential existence of becoming and destruction. Without these two, things cannot exist essentially, because these two are the characteristics of things.

Some say that nonexistence cannot be the characteristic of a thing because it would be like the mane of a frog! Since becoming and destruction are the characteristics of things they truly exist. In response to this, Prajñāpradīpa says that without the ultimate existence of becoming and destruction things would not exist ultimately[3], because a thing has the nature of becoming and destruction. So the premise is not established.[4] [206a–206b] Similarly, without the existence of things—that is, without the basis—the becoming and destruction that are based on them cannot exist. Thus Bhāvaviveka explains this by reading the first two lines after the second two.

1.1.1.2.3 Refutation of becoming and destruction whether or not the basis is empty

If becoming and destruction exist essentially, are they based on that which is inherently empty or on that which is inherently nonempty?

3. Following Lhasa and Tashi Lhumpo *yod ma yin* instead of scrath *ston ma yin*.

4. Tsong khapa may be working with another recension of the text, but the sDe dge actually reads as follows:

> Nonexistence cannot be the characteristic of a thing because it would be like the mane of a frog! Some say that since becoming and destruction are the characteristics of things they actually exist. In response, I say that if anything has becoming and destruction ultimately, it would make sense to say that it is a thing. But since they do not,
>
> Without becoming and destruction,
> There is no existence of things.
>
> This means that things have the nature of becoming and destruction. Since they do not exist, the referent of the premise does not accomplish its purpose. [206a–b]

('di na gang yod pa ma yin pa de ni dngos po'i chos ma yin te, dper na sbal pa'i ze ba bzhin no//'byung ba dang 'jig pa dag ni dngos po'i chos yin pas/ de'i phyir de dag ni yod pa kho na yin no//'dir bshad pa/gal te don dam par 'ga 'zhig la 'byung ba dang/ 'jig pa dag yod par gyur na ni de dngos po zhes brjod par yang rigs par 'gyur grang na/ de dag med pas de'i phyir/ 'byung dang 'jig pa med par ni// dngos po yod pa ma [206B] *yin no//dngos po dang ni 'byung ba dang// 'jig pa'i bdag nyid can yin pa'i phyir ro zhes bya bar dgongs so//de yod pa ma yin pas/gtan tsigs kyi don ma grub pa nyid do//.)*

9. It is not tenable for the empty
To become or to be destroyed.
Nor is it tenable for the nonempty
To become or to be destroyed.

It is not tenable for that which is empty of essential existence to have essentially existent becoming and destruction, because there would be no basis, just like a sky flower. Nor is it tenable that there is becoming and destruction of that which is not empty of existence through its own characteristics, because **[363]** it is impossible for the nonempty to become or to be destroyed. Therefore, it cannot be a basis for such things.

1.1.1.3 Refutation through examination of whether becoming and destruction are identical or different

10. It is not tenable
That destruction and becoming are identical.
Nor is it tenable
That destruction and becoming are different.

If becoming and destruction existed essentially, they could not escape two alternatives with respect to their mode of existence: The inherent identity of becoming and destruction is not tenable because, just like light and darkness, it is impossible for that which is mutually exclusive to be identical. Nor is the inherent difference of becoming and destruction tenable, because if they were different through their own characteristics, then, without any relation, they would be unconnected, but these two are inextricably related to each other.

1.1.2 Refutation of the argument that becoming and destruction exist essentially

This section has two parts: showing that that they are observed is not an argument for the claim and the presentation of an argument for the conclusion.

1.1.2.1 Showing that that they are observed is not an argument for the claim

Suppose one argued as follows: What is the use of these detailed analyses? Even herdsmen and women can see that becoming and destruction exist through their own characteristics! So these two exist essentially.

> 11. If you think you see both
> Destruction and becoming,
> Then you see destruction and becoming
> In virtue of confusion.

Even if you think that you see becoming and destruction both existing inherently in this way, this argument does not entail the existence of becoming and destruction through their own characteristics. This is because herdsmen and women even see cities of gandharvas and illusions and people with cataracts see such things as hairs and flies! The inherent existence of becoming and destruction is seen in virtue of confusion.

1.1.2.2 Presentation of an argument for that claim

This section has two parts: the refutation of becoming and destruction arising from that which is of a homogeneous or heterogeneous kind and the refutation of things arising from self or other.

1.1.2.2.1 Refutation of becoming and destruction arising from that which is of a homogeneous or heterogeneous kind

Now suppose one argued as follows: How is it established that the apparent arising of becoming and destruction are seen to be inherently existent due to pollution by ignorance? This is established through reasoning! What is that reasoning?

> 12. A thing does not arise from a thing.
> A thing does not arise from a non-thing.
> A non-thing does not arise from a non-thing.
> A non-thing does not arise from a thing.

Here, if becoming existed essentially, then it would have to arise either from a thing—that is, an arisen—or from a non-thing—that is, something destroyed. **[364]** And if destruction existed essentially, it would have to arise in the same way. A thing—that which has become—does not arise inherently from a thing of the same kind—that which has become—because if it did arise like that, cause and effect would be simultaneous and there would be an additional arising, and these two things are impossible.

A thing—an arisen—does not arise inherently from a non-thing—that which is destroyed. According to those who take things to be essentially existent, when something is destroyed, it is disintegrated. So, according to them,

since a thing can arise from a nonexistent destroyed thing, the daughter of a barren woman could bear a son!

A non-thing—that which is destroyed—does not arise essentially from a non-thing that is a destroyed thing. This is because the disintegrated state of a nonexistent thing does not have the power to give rise essentially to an effect. And if a disintegration gave rise inherently to another disintegration, then the barren woman's daughter could bear another son!

A non-thing—that which is destroyed—does not arise inherently from a thing—that which has become—because if it did arise like that then a non-disintegrated thing would give rise inherently to a disintegration that is heterogeneous to it. This would be just like the absurd situation of darkness arising from a lamp. Through this kind of analysis one can see that to see becoming and destruction—neither of which *is* essentially existent—*as essentially existent* is to be polluted by confusion.

There is an alternative reading: If becoming and destruction existed essentially, they would have to be based either on things or on non-things. However, since on analysis these two things do not exist essentially, without any basis, where could becoming and destruction be? Therefore, to see these two as having essences is to see them polluted by confusion.

Prasannapadā's explanation that the essencelessness of things and non-things is explained by "a thing does not arise from a thing [138a]" follows Buddhapālita's explanation [258a].

1.1.2.2.2 Refutation of things arising from self or other

[365] On the other hand, someone might argue as follows: if anything existed essentially, becoming and destruction would also exist essentially. But this is not the case, because things do not arise essentially. But essential non-arising does not exist.

> 13. Things do not arise from themselves.
> Nor do they arise from others.
> Since they arise neither from self nor from another,
> How can they arise?

It is not nonexistent because things do not arise from themselves; they do not arise from others; and since they do not arise from both self and other, how could they arise essentially? They could not! This has been explained in the first chapter.

1.2 Showing that the errors of nihilism and reification follow from maintaining the essential existence of arising and destruction

This section has three parts: how reification and nihilism follow from asserting that things exist essentially, refuting the rebuttal and still maintaining those assertions, and the summary of the point of that refutation.

1.2.1 How reification and nihilism follow from asserting that things exist essentially

> 14. If one accepts the existence of entities,
> Reificationism and nihilism will follow.
> For these entities
> Would have to be both permanent and impermanent.

One must accept without any reservation that nothing is essentially arisen. If, instead, one asserted that things exist essentially, then one would, contradicting the scriptures, end up with the view of reification or that of nihilism. This is because if one were to say that the things are permanent, one would become a reificationist; and if one were to say that the things are impermanent, one would become a nihilist.

This has already been explained in the context of

> "Whatever exists essentially,
> Cannot be nonexistent" is reification.
> "It existed before, but doesn't now"
> Entails the error of nihilism. [XV: 11][5]

Thus, to assert that things exist essentially is to assert that they never become nonexistent and is hence reificationism; to assert that while things exist essentially at the first moment they do not exist at all at the second moment is hence nihilism. However, this does not mean that to accept mere existence and momentary impermanence is to succumb to the views of reificationism and nihilism. This is because reificationism and nihilism are abandoned by accepting dependent origination. When teaching dependent origination, it is said, "When this exists, that arises." As the commentary to *Catuḥśataka* says, **[366]**

5. Tsong khapa only quotes the first two lines of this verse. We supply the entire verse for clarity.

> Abhidhārmikas, don't you accept momentary impermanence? If you do not accept it, then you are not followers of the Sugata! Thus if one does not accept momentariness, it would follow that one is not a Buddhist. [*dBu ma* ya 180a]

1.2.2 Refuting the rebuttal while still maintaining those assertions

This section has two parts: the way reification and nihilism are rebutted while maintaining that things exist essentially and its refutation.

1.2.2.1 The way reification and nihilism are rebutted while maintaining that things exist essentially

> 15. Even if one accepts the existence of things,
> Nihilism and reification will not follow.
> Cyclic existence is the continuous
> Becoming and destruction of causes and effects.

Here the reificationists argue as follows: Even though we accept the essential existence of things, we do not thereby become reificationists and nihilists. This is because the continuum of the continuous becoming of effects—that is, their arising—and destruction of causes—that is, their disintegration—is cyclic existence. If one said that after the cessation of the cause the effect did not arise, *that* would be nihilism; and if one said that without the cessation of the cause it maintains its own identity, *that* would be reification. However, since we do not accept these views, we do not succumb to the errors of reification and nihilism.

1.2.2.2 Its refutation

This section has two parts: showing that even though they accept a continuum, they cannot avoid reification and nihilism and showing that the continuum itself does not exist essentially.

1.2.2.2.1 Showing that even though they accept a continuum, they cannot avoid reification and nihilism

> 16. If cyclic existence were the continuous
> Becoming and destruction of causes and effects,

> Since that which is destroyed does not arise again,
> Causes would, absurdly, be annihilated.

Suppose cyclic existence were the continuous becoming of causes and the destruction of effects. Then, since for causes that are destroyed every moment—that is, ones that cease after having given rise to their effects—there is no further arising, nihilism about the continuum of causes would absurdly follow.

If one asserted that things exist through their own characteristics, then effects would be irrelevant to and distinct from their causes. Therefore, although the effects arise, this would not save the continuum of causes from annihilation. Without a continuum of causes that arise again after having ceased, the continuum of causes would be annihilated.

We do not have this problem, because we not assert that things exist essentially. And through this principle—"Whatever comes into being dependent on another [XVIII: 10a]"—just on the grounds of arising, we assert that cause and effect are neither inherently identical to nor different from one another. **[367]**

> 17. If things existed inherently,
> Then their nonexistence would make no sense.
> At the time of nirvana, because it is complete pacification,
> The continuum of cyclic existence would be annihilated.

Someone who asserts that things exist essentially will end up as a reificationist, because if things existed inherently they could not become nonexistent later. This is because their essence would be unchangeable. Therefore, one still cannot avoid the absurd position of reificationism.

These arguments show that if things existed essentially, then it would not be tenable for an effect to arise from a previous cause, nor would the cause cease at the time the effect occurs. Therefore, these two absurdities show that reificationism and nihilism cannot be avoided.

Moreover, according to your view, at the time of attaining nirvana with no residual aggregates, cyclic existence—that is, the essentially proceeding continuum of the aggregates—would be completely pacified—that is, annihilated. Therefore, the absurd consequence of nihilism would follow, but the teacher has said that one should abandon nihilism.

Here, suppose someone said that maintaining this kind of termination of the continuum is not the view of nihilism. To this we reply, by parity of reasoning, that if that were the case, then even in the context of cyclic existence holding such a view would not be nihilism.

1.2.2.2.2 Showing that the continuum itself does not exist essentially

It is not tenable that the continuum as presented by the opponent could exist essentially. How does this go?

> 18. If the final moment were to cease,
> The first moment of life would make no sense.
> If the final moment were not to cease,
> The first moment of life would make no sense.

In this context, the end of life is the final mental state of this life—the state of death. The first moment of life is the entry of consciousness into the embryo. The final moment of that life—that is, its being in the process of ceasing—is already present in the cause; the first moment is in the effect. These two states are called "cyclic existence."

So does that first moment of life arise from that which has finally ceased, from that which has not yet finally ceased, or from that which is in the process of finally ceasing? It does not make sense that when the final moment of life has ceased, the mental states of the first moment of life arise from it. This is because if its cause ceased prior to its occurrence, it would be causeless at the time of its occurrence, and a sprout could arise even from a roasted seed. But nobody maintains that!

When "If the final moment were to cease" refers—to the state of dying, which is not about to cease, because the state of dying, which is in the process of cessation, is mentioned separately. **[368]** There is no such thing, but it is refuted hypothetically. It does not make sense that the first moment of life arises from that, because to say that it did would be to commit many errors.[6]

One would commit the error of saying it is causeless by saying that the first mental state of the succeeding life arises when the state of dying is not about to cease, and these two exist simultaneously. In that case the cause would not give rise to it. One would commit the error of saying that a single sentient being is two entities by saying that the final mental state of this life is simultaneous with the first mental state of the next life. One would commit the error of saying that a sentient being comes into existence *de novo* by saying that prior to that sentient being arising, there is no previous sentient being as its cause. One would commit the error of saying that the previous mental state is permanent by saying that the previous mental state of the continuum endures

6. *Prasannapadā* [139b] identifies five distinct erroneous consequences: that it would be causeless, that a single sentient being would be two entities, that a sentient being would arise *de novo*, that the previous mental state would be permanent, and that a sprout could arise from a disintegrated seed. Tsong khapa now explains these in order.

until the subsequent mental state of that very continuum arises. The error of saying that a sprout could arise from a seed that has not disintegrated [*Prasannapadā* 139b] means that a sprout would be able to arise from a seed that has not transformed.

> 19. If the final moment were ceasing
> And the prior one were arising,
> The one ceasing would be one, and
> The one arising would be another.

If when the final state of life is in the process of cessation—that is, when it is about to cease—the first mental state of the succeeding life arose essentially, a single sentient being would simultaneously have two heterogeneous lives. This is because, for instance, when a human being dies and is reborn as a god, the ceasing human life is one life, and the arising divine intermediate state of life is another life. If it arose through its own characteristic, then the arising effect would exist at the time when the cause is ceasing, as has been previously shown.

1.2.3 Summary of the point of that refutation

> 20. It does not even make sense that the one arising
> And the one ceasing are simultaneous.
> Whoever is dying with respect to the aggregates
> Would also be arising with respect to them.

So, through the approach that has been explained above, the simultaneous existence of the agent of the cessation of that which is in the process of ceasing and the agent of the arising of that which is in the process of arising does not make sense. "Even" indicates that it does not make sense for the first moment of life to arise either from the ceased final state of life, nor from that which is about to cease but which has not ceased. **[369]** So does birth occur essentially with respect to those very aggregates with respect to which one dies? It does not, because it would be absolutely inconsistent for something to be dying at the same time that it is being born.

> 21. Since the continuum of life makes no sense
> In terms of any of the three temporal periods,
> How could that which does not exist in the three temporal periods
> Be the continuum of life?

It does not make sense that the continuum following from the first moment of life—the state of birth—exists essentially in any of the three temporal

periods: neither in the final moment of life that has ceased, nor in that which has not yet ceased, nor in that which is ceasing. So how could that which does not make sense in terms of the three temporal periods make sense in terms of something else? Therefore, since the continuum of life is essenceless, the statement that since "life is the continuous becoming and destruction of causes and effects [16ab]" the continuum of life exists essentially makes no sense.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that the explanation of arising and destruction, birth and death, and going from one life to another as empty of inherent existence can also be corroborated by profound scriptures, and to demonstrate that, all of the sūtras that address this issue are explained by this chapter. The *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says:

> The three realms, like a dream, are insubstantial;
> Quickly destroyed, impermanent and illusory;
> Neither having come here; nor going from here,
> Continua are perpetually empty and without representation.

And then

> Although there is birth and death,
> For he who knows that
> Things are birthless and deathless
> Samādhi is not difficult to attain. [*mDo de* da 45b][7]

And it is said,

> Whoever knows the inconceivable phenomena—
> These people will be always blissful,
> Without conceptualizing good or evil;
> These all are revealed to be mental fabrications.
>
> Since everything is inconceivable and nothing comes into being, **[370]**
> Knowledge of things and non-things is destroyed.
> Any fool who is overpowered by the mind
> Will suffer for a billion lives. [*Upāliparipṛcchā-sūtra, dkon brtsegs* ca 128b]

7. In the text the fourth line reads *ting 'dzin 'di ni rnyed mi dga'*. This is present in the Lhasa edition as well, but *dga'* is obviously an error and should read *dka'* as confirmed by the sDe dge edition of the sūtra, which reads *de la ting 'dzin rnyed mi dka'*.

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

Arising and destruction, birth and death, and the continuum of life which uninterruptedly goes from one life to another are regarded as existing through their own characteristic; but rational analysis into whether or not they exist in reality has refuted this. One cannot work without these conventions; therefore, one should be led to ascertain the way in which they are completely tenable in the context of their emptiness of their own characteristics.

This is the commentary on the twenty-first chapter, having twenty-one verses, called the "examination of becoming and destruction."

CHAPTER XXII

Examination of the Tathāgata

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of the existence of the Tathāgata through his own characteristic
    1.1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the appropriator
      1.1.1.1 Refutation of the substantial existence of the Tathāgata
      1.1.1.2 Refutation of the essential existence of dependent designations based on the aggregates
        1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the Tathāgata as dependently designated based on the aggregates
          1.1.1.2.1.1 If something is designated depending on the aggregates, it does not exist essentially
          1.1.1.2.1.2 Refutation of the response that these two are not contradictory
          1.1.1.2.1.3 Showing that if there is no essence, neither can there be the nature of being other
          1.1.1.2.1.4 Showing that thus the Tathāgata is established as lacking essential existence
        1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of the Tathāgata and the aggregates as appropriator and appropriated
      1.1.1.3 Drawing conclusions from these
    1.1.2 Refutation of the inherent existence of that which is appropriated
    1.1.3 Drawing conclusions from these two
  1.2 Showing that there is no room for others' false views
  1.3 Presentation of the deficiencies of those false views

1.4 Applying arguments to those other views
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[370:9] We now begin the fifth section of the extensive explanation of selflessness: the presentation of the essential emptiness of the continuum of life. This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the Tathāgata; and the refutation of the essential existence of the afflictions. This chapter constitutes the first of those two parts. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citation from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here some say that the continuum of life exists essentially because the Tathāgata exists essentially. The Victor, for the benefit of sentient beings, accumulated vast merits for either three or seven countless aeons and attained buddhahood through these long efforts. If the continuum of his life had not existed essentially, the Tathāgata could not exist, because the attainment of buddhahood depends on going through many births in cyclic existence.

Efforts have been made through the various lights of reason to dispel the deep darkness of your ignorance. But, because you have been habituated to it for a very long time it has not been dispelled. This shows that because your deep ignorance has not been dispelled, the continuum of cyclic existence has not been terminated **[371]** and instead has been prolonged. If the Tathāgata existed essentially, the continuum of cyclic existence would exist essentially as well, but he does not.

This discussion has four parts: the refutation of the existence of the Tathāgata through his own characteristic, showing that there is no room for others' false views, the presentation of the deficiencies of those false views, and applying arguments to those other views.

1.1 Refutation of the existence of the Tathāgata through his own characteristic

This section has three parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the appropriator, the refutation of the inherent existence of that which is appropriated, and drawing conclusions from these two.

1.1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the appropriator

This section has three parts: the refutation of the substantial existence of the Tathāgata, the refutation of the essential existence of dependent designations based on the aggregates, and drawing conclusions from these.

1.1.1.1 Refutation of the substantial existence of the Tathāgata

> 1. Neither the aggregates, nor different from the aggregates,
> The aggregates are not in him, nor is he in the aggregates.
> The Tathāgata does not possess the aggregates.
> What is the Tathāgata?

If the Tathāgata existed through his own characteristic, then he would have to be either essentially identical to or essentially different from his aggregates: material form, feeling, perception, dispositions, and consciousness. Although in a buddha realm the five aggregates of virtue, samadhi, wisdom, complete liberation, and the wisdom of complete liberation exist, the five aggregates should be taken as the former ones, but not the latter ones. This is because the former ones are the basis for the designation of sentient beings, and the latter ones do not apply both to ordinary and noble beings and are included among the former.

If he were essentially different from them, then either the aggregates would depend on the Tathāgata or the Tathāgata would depend on the aggregates; the Tathāgata would possess the aggregates just as Lhejin possesses his wealth. However, none of these are tenable.

The Tathāgata is not identical to the aggregates through his own characteristics because otherwise **[372]**, as was shown in the tenth chapter, agent and object would be identical; and as we explained in the eighteenth chapter, he would arise and cease through his own characteristic. If one were to maintain that he is, then as the *Madhyamakāvatāra* and its autocommentary explain [VI: 128, 296b], three problems arise. Since the agent of the action is momentary, at the time the effect of the action occurs it does not exist. Since there would therefore be no basis, there would be no relation between actions and their effects. Therefore, the accumulated karmas would be exhausted.

If one were to maintain that one at a later moment enjoys the effect of an action performed at a previous moment, then one would commit the error of saying that one would could encounter the karma of actions one had not performed, because the effect of the action—the karma accumulated by the agent—would be enjoyed by someone else.

Nor can one say that this error is not committed because, although the previous and later moments are different, there is only a single continuum. This is because if each of the moments arose distinctly through its own characteristic, cause and effect would not be possible. Thus the error mentioned previously concerning the untenability of a single continuum cannot be avoided.

Just as we do not remember "my body came into being long ago," the Tathāgata would not be able to say, "In that life I was Ngalenu." This is because the self that existed then would have disintegrated, just like the body, and in this context the opponent accepts that a self that is different through its own characteristic from that previous one has arisen.

The Tathāgata is not different from the five aggregates through his own characteristic because, just as it was explained in the tenth chapter, he could come into existence without the aggregates. Moreover, as it was explained in the eighteenth chapter, he would have to be substantially different from either the characteristics characterizing the aggregates as produced phenomena or from the characteristics of each of the aggregates.

Since the Tathāgata and the aggregates are not essentially distinct, neither do the aggregates inherently depend upon the Tathāgata, nor does the Tathāgata inherently depend upon the aggregates. **[373]** The Tathāgata does not inherently possess the aggregates in the way that Lhejin possesses his cattle or his nose, because, respectively, they are neither essentially different, nor are they essentially identical.

Since the three remaining alternatives are included in the first two, identity and difference comprise these alternatives. However, considering the way things are taken according to the view of the transitory aggregates, here and in the tenth chapter, all five alternatives are presented. Since the Tathāgata cannot exist essentially in any of these five alternative ways, how could he exist through his own characteristic? Since he does not exist like that, the continuum of life is also empty of essence.

1.1.1.2 Refutation of the essential existence of dependent designations based on the aggregates

This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the Tathāgata as dependently designated based on the aggregates and the refutation of the essential existence of the Tathāgata and the aggregates as appropriator and appropriated.

1.1.1.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the Tathāgata as dependently designated based on the aggregates

This section has four parts: if something is designated depending on the aggregates, it does not exist essentially, the refutation of the response that these two are not contradictory, showing that if there is no essence, neither can there be the nature of being other, and showing that thus the Tathāgata is established as lacking essential existence.

1.1.1.2.1.1 If something is designated depending on the aggregates, it does not exist essentially

The Sammitīya say that as one would commit the errors presented above, the Tathāgata and the aggregates are neither identical nor different. Neither are there aggregates in the Tathāgata as there are trees on a snow mountain nor is there a Tathāgata in the aggregates as there is a lion in the forest; nor does the Tathāgata possess the aggregates as the Cakravartin emperor possesses the relevant marks. This is because he is maintained to be neither identical to nor different from the aggregates. Then how does it go? The inexpressible Tathāgata who is neither identical to nor different from the aggregates is posited in dependence on the aggregates. Thus **[374]** the refutation of the five alternatives does not undermine our position.

> 2. If the Buddha, depending on the aggregates,
> Does not exist through an essence,
> How could something that does not exist through its essence
> Exist through the nature of another?

If the Buddha were designated in dependence on the aggregates, then he would not exist through an essence, or essentially because of being dependently designated, just like a reflection. How could that which does not exist through an essence—that is, inherently—depending on the aggregates, exist inherently through the nature of another? It could not!

1.1.1.2.1.2 Refutation of the response that these two are not contradictory

Suppose one argued as follows: Since the reflection does not exist with the essence of that which it appears to be, it does not exist through an essence. But just as it exists in dependence on such other things as the face and the

mirror, the Tathāgata also, although not existing through an essence, depends on the aggregates and so exists inherently through the nature of another.

> 3. Whatever is dependent on the nature of another,
> Its selfhood is not tenable.
> How could that which lacks selfhood
> Be a Tathāgata?

If one were to maintain that the Tathāgata—that which is dependent on the essence of another—exists like a reflection, then, just as in the case of the reflection, it would not be tenable that that Tathāgata exists with selfhood—that is, with inherently existent essence. Whatever is like a reflection lacks selfhood—that is, is essenceless. So how could such a Tathāgata exist essentially? It could not!

The previous verse says that if he existed inherently he would have to be designated as inherently existent; it would not be tenable to designate him in dependence on the aggregates. This following verse responds that it is inconsistent to say that he does not exist inherently in virtue of not depending on another but inherently exists as dependent on another.

1.1.1.2.1.3 Showing that if there is no essence, neither can there be the nature of being other

> 4. If there is no essence
> How could there be the nature of being other?

If the Tathāgata existed inherently, depending on him, the aggregates would be other entities. The Tathāgata would exist in dependence on them. But if the Tathāgata does not have **[375]** inherently existent essence, then in virtue of this, how could the aggregates have the nature of being other? They could not.

1.1.1.2.1.4 Showing that thus the Tathāgata is established as lacking essential existence

> 4cd Apart from having essence or the nature of another,
> What could the Tathāgata be?

Since there is no essence or nature of another existing inherently, apart from having essence or the nature of another, how could there be an essentially existing Tathāgata? There could not be!

Nāgārjuna's approach in this entire treatise is to lead one to realize the

mutual inconsistency of dependent origination and existence through one's own characteristic. However, this chapter repeatedly clarifies that point.

1.1.1.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of the Tathāgata and the aggregates as appropriator and appropriated

The Sammitīya, who assert that whether the Tathāgata is the same as or different from the aggregates is inexpressible, say that he is imputed in dependence upon the aggregates. They maintain that the Tathāgata as the appropriator and his aggregates as the appropriated exist through their own characteristics.

> 5. If, without depending on the aggregates
> There could be a Tathāgata at all,
> He would now depend on them.
> Through depending on them he would be dependent.

If—just as Lhejin, who exists prior to his wealth, appropriates his wealth—there could be a Tathāgata at all who, without depending on the aggregates, existed prior to them, he would now be dependent on the aggregates. Through depending on them he would become an appropriator. On analysis, no Tathāgata at all can exist prior to and without depending on the aggregates, because there would be no ground for the designation of "Tathāgata."

> 6. Inasmuch as there is no Tathāgata
> Not dependent upon the aggregates,
> If he does not exist without depending on them,
> How could he appropriate them?

Inasmuch as there is no Tathāgata not dependent on the aggregates—that is, prior to them there is none—how could the Tathāgata essentially appropriate the aggregates? He could not! Thus since there is not even the slightest essential appropriation of the aggregates, it is not tenable to say that the Tathāgata exists inherently in dependence upon the aggregates.

> 7. Without the appropriated,
> There is no appropriation.
> Without appropriation,
> How can there be a Tathāgata?

[376] Since without existing previously the Tathāgata did not essentially appropriate that which is to be appropriated even the slightest bit, how could the appropriation of the aggregates exist essentially? It could not! Since nobody appropriates essentially, there can be no appropriation of essentially appropri-

ated aggregates. Thus, with no essentially existing appropriation, the Tathāgata could not exist essentially.

1.1.1.3 Drawing conclusions from these

8. Having been sought in the fivefold way,
How can that which is neither identical nor different
Be designated as the Tathāgata
In virtue of appropriating?

Having been sought analytically through the five modes of examination explained above, the Tathāgata is found to be neither inherently identical to nor inherently different from the aggregates. Therefore, how could that Tathāgata that does not exist inherently in any of these other three ways, including as a basis or as dependent, be designated as existing inherently in virtue of the appropriation of the aggregates? He could not be!

1.1.2 Refutation of the inherent existence of that which is appropriated

These analyses have not only shown that the Tathāgata is essenceless, but also that the five aggregates that are to be appropriated, such as material form and feeling, do not exist through their essence—that is essentially. This is because they are dependently originated, and because their essential existence has already been extensively refuted in the examination of the aggregates.

Now, suppose someone argued as follows: Even though that which is to be appropriated does not exist essentially without depending on another, depending on other causes and conditions, it exists essentially.

9. Whatever there is to be appropriated
Does not exist through essence.
And when something does not exist through its own nature,
It can never exist through the nature of another.

It is impossible for something that does not depend on another, and that does not exist through its own nature—that is, inherently—to exist essentially through the nature of other causes and conditions. This is because it is inconsistent for something to exist inherently and also to depend upon another. Another way to read this is as follows: Since it depends upon the appropriator, that which is appropriated does not exist inherently.[1]

1. These alternative readings reflect an ambiguity in the Sanskrit *upādānam* which can mean either *ap-*

[377] Now suppose someone said that in that case they would depend upon the appropriator. We would respond that whatever is to be appropriated does not exist inherently; for how could it exist essentially through the nature of another—the appropriator?

1.1.3 Drawing conclusions from these two

> 10. Thus appropriated and appropriator
> Are empty in every respect.
> How can an empty Tathāgata
> Be imputed through the empty?

As it has been explained earlier, both the appropriator and that which is to be appropriated are empty of existence through their own characteristics in every respect. Since that which is to be appropriated is empty of essential existence, how could one impute the Tathāgata, who is empty of essential existence as inherently existent? One could not. Therefore it makes no sense to say that the Tathāgata designated in dependence upon the aggregates exists inherently.

1.2 Showing that there is no room for others' false views

Suppose someone responded: Alas! Having abandoned the teachings of other teachers like Kaṇāda, we have taken refuge in the Tathāgata and aspire to liberation. But, since you have said that the Tathāgata does not exist essentially by saying things like "thus appropriated and appropriator . . . " [XXII: 10], our aspiration to liberation has been quashed. Therefore, it is time to dispute with you, since you have uprooted the medicinal tree of the Tathāgata!

> 11. We do not assert "Empty."
> Nor do we assert "Nonempty."
> We neither assert both nor neither.
> They are asserted only for the purpose of designation.

Here, we have no hope for liberation for people like you, because while having abandoned other systems in the hope of attaining liberation, although you have taken refuge in the Buddha, you have not digested his teaching of

propriation or *that which is to be appropriated*. The Tibetan translation disambiguates this in favor of the latter reading, but Candrakīrti takes the former as the primary reading and offers the latter as an alternative [143b], and Tsong khapa follows him this approach.

selflessness, which is not shared by the orthodox schools. Therefore you follow the evil path that leads straight to the wilderness of cyclic existence!

We do not say that because the Tathāgata is *empty* he is *nonexistent,* which *would* be to commit the error of deprecating him. Moreover, the Tathāgata has been shown to be essenceless. Because we aspire to present the undistorted meaning, **[378]** nor do we say that he is *nonempty*—that is, that he exists *inherently.*

We do not assert both of these; nor do we assert neither that he exists nor does not exist because *ultimately* none of these four alternatives can be maintained. On the other hand, if we did *not* assert these *conventionally,* those to whom we speak would not understand us. So, from the standpoint of the conventional truth and for conventional purposes, we say "empty" and "nonempty," "both empty and nonempty," and "neither empty nor nonempty." We say these having mentally imputed them from the perspective of those people to whom we are speaking. Therefore, we simply say that "they are asserted only for the purpose of designation."

> 12. How can the tetralemma of permanent, impermanent, etc.,
> Be true of the pacified?
> How can the tetralemma of finite, infinite, etc.,
> Be true of the pacified?

The eighteenth chapter has already explained the teacher's intent in saying "empty," etc. Just as the Tathāgata is ultimately free of each of the four alternatives ("empty," etc.) how could this system, in which the inherent existence of the Buddha has been laid to rest, fall under any of the four alternatives—permanence or impermanence of the world, etc., and those to which "etc." refers, *viz.,* both permanence and impermanence and neither permanence nor impermanence—that are grasped by those who have distorted views? It could not.

Similarly, how could the system in which this has been laid to rest fall under any of the four alternatives—finitude or infinitude of the world, etc., and those to which "etc." refers, *viz,* both finitude and infinitude and neither finitude nor infinitude—that are grasped by those who have distorted views? It could not!

> 13. One who holds firmly
> That the Tathāgata exists
> Will have to fabricate his nonexistence
> After having achieved nirvana.

Whoever holds firmly that *only this is true* but all the others are confused will fabricate the existence, nonexistence, both, or neither of the Tathāgata who has achieved nirvana, having passed away, fabricating through one of these

four distorted views. The Tibetan translation of *Prasannapadā* has the translation of the root text as it is quoted here, and the commentary in *Prasannapadā* accords with that translation. **[379]** but the Tibetan translation of the *Buddhapālita* has it as follows:

> One who is a firm holder
> That the Tathāgata exists
> Will have to fabricate his existence or his nonexistence
> After having achieved nirvana.[2]

We have commented according to this translation because it is more felicitous.

> 14. Since he is essentially empty,
> Neither the thought that the Buddha exists
> Nor that he does not exist
> After having achieved nirvana is tenable.

On the view according to which the Tathāgata exists as essentially empty, it is not tenable to grasp him by thinking that after having achieved nirvana either the Buddha exists, he does not exist both or neither. These twelve views and the two views that one's life is either identical to or different from one's body are said to be the fourteen views to which the Buddha would not assent. This is because since all of these presuppose the inherent existence of the self, these questions receive no answer. Those who asked these questions were not vessels of the profound; therefore, it was inappropriate to explain the meaning of selflessness to them. Even had he explained such things as permanence and impermanence, that would have given rise either to reification or to nihilism and so would have served no purpose.

In this context, "the world" refers to the self.[3] And that also refers to the Tathāgata and so all of this applies to the Buddha. Although in this context, the last two views are not explained, the fact that these two are not tenable is entailed by the previous refutation of the aggregates' identity to and difference from the self.

2. In the sDe dge edition of *Prasannapadā* this verse reads *gang gis de bzhin gshegs yod ces/'dzin pa stug po bzung gyur pa/de ni mya ngan 'das pa la/med ces rnam rtog rtog par byed//* [145b], while in the sDe dge edition of the *Buddhapālita* it reads: *gang gis 'dzin stug bzung gyur pa/de ni mya ngan 'das pa la/de bzhin gshegs pa yod ce'am/med ces rnam rtog rtog par byed//* [265b].

The Sanskrit *Yena grāho gṛhītastu ghano stīti tathāgataḥ/nāstīti sa vikalpayanni-nivṛtasyāpti kalpayet/* is ambiguous and can be read either way, yielding two commentarial traditions, issuing in distinct Tibetan translations.

3. The fourteen questions are those such as "Does the world have a beginning?" "Does the world have an end?" etc. Tsong khapa is pointing out that everything said about the unanswerability of these questions about the world applies to the self and to the Tathāgata.

1.3 Presentation of the deficiencies of those false views

> 15. Those who develop fabrications with regard to the Buddha—
> The unextinguished one who has gone beyond all fabrication—
> And are impaired by those fabrications,
> Fail to see the Tathāgata.

Those simpletons who, through distorted views explained earlier, fabricate such things as the permanence and impermanence of the victorious Buddha who is free from all mundane fabrications and who, being essentially unarisen, does not extinguish by essentially passing on, **[380]** thereby have impaired wisdom eyes. None of them will see the Tathāgata as he really is just as the congenitally blind cannot see the sun. Thus the *Vajracchedikā-sūtra* says:

> Whoever see me as material form
> And those who know me as sound—
> Who discard me through distortions—
> Such people do not see me.
>
> The buddhas should be seen as reality.
> And the guides should be seen as dharmakāya.[4]
> Reality is not an object of knowledge.
> It is impossible to comprehend it. [*Sher phyin sNa tshogs* ka 131a]

These passages show that those who grasp such fabricated phenomena as form and sound as truly existent have thereby, through distorting the way the Buddha really is, discarded him. Thus they do not see the Buddha as he really is. The way the Buddha really is should be seen as reality and is dharmakaya. Reality is not to be known in the way that it has been previously expounded, because it cannot be comprehended in that manner. This is because this confirms that those whose cognitive vision has been impaired by fabrication do not see the Tathāgata, and it implies that if their cognitive vision were not impaired by fabrication, they would see.

1.4 Applying arguments to those other views

Through this examination of the Tathāgata the world of sentient beings is also examined. Just as the world of sentient beings is essenceless, the vessel is also essenceless. This is because the essence of the transmigrators is similar to the

4. The Buddha's embodiment as truth, or as reality seen as it is.

essence of the Tathāgata. So, one might ask, what is the essence of the Tathāgata?

16. Whatever is the essence of the Tathāgata,
That is the essence of the transmigrator.
The Tathāgata has no essence.
The transmigrator has no essence.

The Tathāgata is designated in dependence on the aggregates and does not exist inherently, and thus is essenceless. Similarly, the transmigrators are also designated in dependence on their respective bases **[381]** and lack the essence of existing on their own. The absence of inherent existence of the transmigrators has already been demonstrated in such chapters as the examination of conditions.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that the explanation of the Thatāgata and his attributes—his aggregates—as essenceless can also be corroborated by profound sūtras and that all of those discussions are explained by this chapter. The *Sarvabuddhaviṣayāvatārajñānālokālaṃkāra-sūtra* says:

The Tathāgata is an eternally unarisen phenomenon.
All phenomena are like the Tathāgata.
Fools who are attached to representations
Engage with things that do not exist in the world.

The Tathāgata is like the reflection of
Uncontaminated virtuous phenomena.
Here neither reality nor the Tathāgata exists.
So the entire world should be seen to be like a reflection. [*mDo sde* ga 284b]

In the *Prajñāpāramitā* it also says:

"O Noble Subhūti, it is said that sentient beings are like illusions; are they not like illusions?"

When the ven Subhūti was addressed like this, he replied to the divine sons as follows: "O, divine sons, sentient beings are like illusions! O divine sons, they are like dreams. O, divine sons, since they are like that, sentient beings and illusions are not distinct, because they cannot be distinguished. Since they are like that, dreams and sentient beings are not distinct, because they cannot be distinguished."

He also said to the divine sons that all phenomena are like dreams and like illusions, and that stream-enterers, once-returners, nonreturners, their four fruits, and the arhats are also said to be like that. Thus, the person and **[382]** the effects connected with its continuum are shown to be essenceless. Thereafter, pratyekabuddhas, partyekabuddhahood, the completely enlightened one, and complete enlightenment are also said to be like that. Thus it is shown that the person and its attributes are essenceless.

Thereafter, the divine ones asked him, "O, noble Subhūti, is it said that the completely enlightened Buddha as well is like an illusion and like a dream, and is it said that complete enlightenment is like an illusion and like a dream?"

Subhūti replied, "O divine sons, when nirvana as well is said to be like an illusion and like a dream, then of course other phenomena are!"

Then the divine ones asked, "O, noble Subhūti, is nirvana as well like an illusion and like a dream?"

Subhūti replied, "O divine sons, even if there were something superior to nirvana, I would say that that is also like an illusion and like a dream. Thus there is no distinction between nirvana and a dream or an illusion because they cannot be distinguished." [*Aṣṭasāhaśrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra, Sher phyin* ka 22b]

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

If phenomena existed through their own characteristics, the ontological status of the Tathāgata and his attributes would not make any sense. But their ontological status is completely tenable insofar as they are dependently originated and empty of existence through their own characteristics. Thus it is completely tenable in this system, and only in this system, to posit the Tathāgata as a refuge object.

This is the commentary on the twenty-second chapter, having sixteen verses, called "the examination of the Tathāgata."

CHAPTER XXIII

Examination of Errors

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the afflictions
    1.1.1 Refutation through arguments from dependent origination
    1.1.2 Refutation through arguments from the essencelessness of the basis
      1.1.2.1 Refutation through arguments that the self is not a basis
      1.1.2.2 Refutation through arguments that the mind is not a basis
    1.1.3 Refutation through arguments from the essencelessness of the cause
    1.1.4 Refutation through arguments from the essencelessness of the object
    1.1.5 Refutation through another analysis of the essencelessness of the cause
      1.1.5.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the cause of attachment and aversion
      1.1.5.2 Refutation of the essential existence of the cause of confusion
        1.1.5.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of error
          1.1.5.2.1.1 Refutation of the grasping of permanence as essentially erroneous
          1.1.5.2.1.2 Refutation of the grasping of impermanence as essentially nonerroneous
          1.1.5.2.1.3 Refutation of the essential existence of mere grasping
        1.1.5.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of one who has error
          1.1.5.2.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the possessor in virtue of the essencelessness of the possessed phenomena
          1.1.5.2.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of the basis of error

1.1.5.2.2.3 Refutation of error arising essentially
1.1.5.2.3 Refutation through examination of whether or not the object of error exists
1.1.5.2.4 Demonstration of the great value of these refutations
1.2 Refutation of the essential existence of the methods of their elimination as arguments for their existence
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

We are still in the fifth section of the extensive explanation of selflessness: the presentation of the essential emptiness of the continuum of life. We have completed the first of its two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the Tathāgata. **[382:19]** This chapter constitutes the second of those two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of afflictions. It has three sections: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citation from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

[383] Here someone might argue as follows: the cause of cyclic existence exists essentially, because *its* causes exist essentially. Action arises from the afflictions; the continuous series of birth and death following one another arises as an effect from action and the afflictions, and that is the continuum of cyclic existence. The principal cause is the afflictions, because when they are eliminated, even though there is karma, the continuum of cyclic existence is terminated.

If the afflictions existed essentially, the continuum of cyclic existence would exist essentially. However, this is not the case. The refutation of this assertion has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the afflictions and the refutation of the essential existence of the methods of their elimination as arguments for their existence.

1.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the afflictions

This section has five parts: the refutation through the arguments from dependent origination, the refutation through arguments from the essencelessness of the basis, the refutation through arguments from the essencelessness of the cause, the refutation through arguments from the essencelessness of the object, and the refutation through another analysis from the essencelessness of the cause.

1.1.1 Refutation through arguments from dependent origination

It says in sūtra that desire, aversion, and confusion arise from improper conceptualization.

> Oh desire, I know your source!
> You arise entirely from conceptualization.
> [*Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodana-sūtra, mDo sde* tsha 233a]

The reason why only the three poisons are mentioned here is that all of the others are the effects of these three, and these are the principal afflictions.

> 1. Desire, hatred, and confusion
> Arise completely from conceptualization, it is said.
> They all arise in dependence on
> The pleasant, the unpleasant, and errors.

Desire arises in dependence on representing things as pleasant, aversion in dependence on representing things as unpleasant, and confusion through errors about things. Conceptualization is the common cause of all of these three. According to the *Pratītyasamutpāda-sūtra*:[1]

> What is the cause of ignorance? Improper thought. Confusion arises from muddy thought. [*Bodhisattvapiṭaka, dKon brtsegs* kha 187b]

[384] Thus it is known that confusion arises from conceptulization.

> 2. Since whatever arises in dependence on the pleasant, the unpleasant,
> Or error does not exist through an essence,
> The afflictions
> Do not exist in reality.

Whatever arises in dependence on a pleasant object, an unpleasant object, or an object of error cannot exist essentially. This is because if such things as desire existed essentially, their essence would be uncreated and would not depend on causes and conditions; they would not arise in dependence on such things as pleasant objects; but in fact they *do* arise in dependence on such things as pleasant objects. Therefore, the afflictions such as desire do not exist in reality. This means that they neither exist ultimately nor essentially. This

1. This quotation is misattributed. Moreover, the translation in the sDe dge edition is slightly different from that from which Tsong khapa quotes, with no difference in meaning.

shows that such a refutation is not possible without applying a modifying term, such as "really" and this is true of other cases.

The conceptualization that is the cause of confusion is erroneous and will be explained below. The conceptualization that is the cause of desire and aversion is the improper thought that fabricates representations of objects as pleasant and unpleasant, respectively. The other two masters explain that the second verse refutes the first verse, which, they say, states that since the three poisons arise from conceptualizations, they exist essentially. So, they explain error as twofold: error about the pleasant and error about the unpleasant [*Buddhapālita* 267a, *Prajñāpradīpa* 219b–220a].

The mādhyamika maintains that the fact that an effect arises from causes is a reason for its essencelessness, while the reificationists maintain that it is a reason for its essential existence. Therefore, since these verses can be interpreted in both ways, there is no contradiction here. The autocommentary to *Śūnyatāsaptati* says that the pleasant, the unpleasant and error are the causes of desire, aversion and confusion, respectively. Since it is easy to establish that that which arises through the power of conception is empty of existence through its own characteristic, this is presented as the argument for that claim. [*dBu ma* tsa 119b] *Śūnyatāsaptati* says,

> Since one desires that, is averse to that,
> And is confused with regard to that,
> Conceptualization gives rise to these.
> Nor does conceptualization exist in reality. [60]

1.1.2 Refutation through arguments from the essencelessness of the basis

[385] This section has two parts: the refutation through arguments that the self is not a basis and the refutation through arguments that the mind is not a basis.

1.1.2.1 Refutation through arguments that the self is not a basis

It has already been explained in such places as the examination of the self that the existence and nonexistence of the self cannot be established essentially in any way. Since the self does not exist, the existence and nonexistence of the afflictions that depend on it cannot be established essentially in any way either. Now, suppose someone thought as follows: Why is the fact that the existence and nonexistence of the self are not established essentially a reason for the fact that the existence and nonexistence of the afflictions are not established essentially?

> 3. The self's existence or nonexistence
> Has in no way been established.
> Without that, how could the afflictions'
> Existence or nonexistence be established?

Since, just like murals on a wall, the afflictions depend on the conceptualization that gives rise to them, what could the basis of these afflictions be? Without a basis, they cannot exist.

> 4. The one to whom the afflictions belong
> Has not been established as existent.
> Without anyone to whom they belong,
> There are no afflictions of anyone.

On analysis, the basis must be either a self or a single sentient being. But as previous extensive refutations have shown, they do not exist essentially. Without anyone—the self or the person as a basis—no afflictions exist essentially in any basis.

1.1.2.2 Refutation through arguments that the mind is not a basis

Suppose someone argued as follows: Although it is not maintained that the basis of the afflictions exists prior to their existence, and although the self does not exist as the basis, since the afflictions arise depending on the afflicted mind, such a mind and the afflictions arise simultaneously.

> 5. Just as one views one's own body, the afflictions are
> Not in the afflicted in the fivefold way.
> Just as one views one's own body, the afflicted is
> Not in the afflictions in the fivefold way.

Just as, upon analysis, the self—which is the object grasped when one views one's own body through the view of the transitory aggregates—does not exist in the fivefold way, the afflictions which afflict those who have afflictions—the afflicted ones—do not exist in the afflicted ones in the fivefold way. Here, to say that the afflicted mind just is the afflicted mental episode does not make sense, because in that case agent and action would be identical.

[386] These two, on the other hand, are not different through their own characteristics, because in that case they would be independent. Since they are neither essentially identical nor essentially different, neither can inherently be the basis of the other, be based on the other, or possess the other. Just as the self, which is grasped when one views one's own body through the view of the transitory aggregates, does not exist in the fivefold way, the afflicted mind does

not exist in the afflictions in the fivefold way, as has been previously explained. But this has been a digression.

1.1.3 Refutation through arguments from the essencelessness of the cause

Suppose one said that the afflictions exist essentially because their causes—the pleasant, the unpleasant, and confusion—exist essentially.

> 6. The pleasant, the unpleasant, and the errors
> Do not exist through essence.
> What afflictions could depend
> On the pleasant, unpleasant, or errors?

Pleasant objects, unpleasant objects, and objects of error do not exist through their own essence—that is, they do not exist inherently, because they are dependently originated. Their essential existence will be refuted below. Therefore, the afflictions that arise in dependence on the pleasant, the unpleasant, and error do not exist essentially.

1.1.4 Refutation through arguments from the essencelessness of the object

Now, suppose one said that the afflictions exist essentially because their six objects exist essentially.

> 7. Material form, sound, taste, touch,
> Smell, and phenomena[2]: These six
> Are thought of as the foundation of
> Desire, aversion, and confusion.

Here in virtue of being physical, there is material form; in virtue of making noise, there is sound; in virtue of being sniffed, there is smell; in virtue of being savored, there is taste; in virtue of being felt, there is touch; and in virtue of having characteristics, or in virtue of containing the supreme phenomenon—nirvana—something is a phenomenon. Since these six kinds of representation are present here, these are the bases—that is, the objects.

Objects of what? That which pleases the mind is the basis of desire, that which displeases the mind is the basis of aversion, and that which confuses the mind is the basis of confusion. That is because when these are imagined

2. *Chos*/dharma. This term here refers to the object of the cognitive faculty.

to be pleasant, desire arises; when these are imagined to be unpleasant, aversion arises; and when they are imagined to be permanent, to be selves, etc., confusion arises.

Suppose someone now argued as follows: Although it is true that you have posited them as the basis of the afflictions, [387] material form, sound, taste, touch, smell, and phenomena exist only—that is, merely—as imputed but they are not essentially existent. If they are essenceless, how could they be perceived?

> 8. Material form, sound, taste, touch,
> Smell, and phenomena: These six
> Are only like a city of gandharvas or
> Like a mirage or a dream.

Though they are essenceless, they are perceived, just like a city of gandharvas, a mirage, or a dream.

1.1.5 Refutation through another analysis of the essencelessness of the cause

This section has two parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the cause of attachment and aversion; and the refutation of the essential existence of the cause of confusion.

1.1.5.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the cause of attachment and aversion

> 9. How could the
> Pleasant and unpleasant arise
> In those that are like an illusory person
> And like a reflection?

Since, just like such things as the city of gandharvas, although they are essenceless, they are erroneously perceived as having essences, the six objects are just like an illusory person or a reflection. So, how could representations of them as pleasant or as unpleasant arise essentially? They could not, because they arise in dependence on an erroneous basis. As it is said,

> Self-grasping gives rise to the aggregates.
> But self-grasping is in fact unreal.
> How can something real arise
> The seed of which is unreal? [*Ratnāvalī* I: 29]

These are the arguments that demonstrate the falsity of the representations of the pleasant and the unpleasant because they have erroneous bases.

> 10. The unpleasant, depending on which
> The pleasant is imputed,
> Cannot exist without depending on the pleasant.
> Therefore, the pleasant is not tenable.

Now, they are also shown to be false on the grounds that they are mutually dependent. This is because, like the long and short, the pleasant and unpleasant exist in mutual dependence, but cannot exist independently. Thus the unpleasant, which is the basis of its dependence—that depending on which the pleasant is designated, that is posited—cannot exist without depending on the pleasant. Therefore, it is not tenable that the pleasant object exists inherently. Since the unpleasant object depends on the pleasant object, it cannot exist inherently either. It would be inconsistent for the basis of dependence not to exist inherently and the dependent phenomenon to exist inherently.

> 11. The pleasant, depending on which
> The unpleasant is imputed,
> Cannot exist without depending on the unpleasant,
> Therefore, the unpleasant is not tenable.

[388] The pleasant object, which is the basis of its dependence—that depending on which the unpleasant is designated—cannot exist without depending on the unpleasant. Therefore it is untenable that the unpleasant exists inherently.

> 12. If there is no pleasant,
> How could there be desire?
> If there is no unpleasant,
> How could there be aversion?

Therefore, since the representation of the pleasant does not exist inherently, how could desire, which is caused by it, exist inherently? And since the representation of the unpleasant does not exist inherently, how could aversion, which is caused by it, exist inherently for it has no cause?

1.1.5.2 Refutation of the essential existence of the cause of confusion

This section has four parts: the refutation of the essential existence of error, the refutation of the essential existence of one who has error, the refutation

through examination of whether or not the object of error exists, and the demonstration of the great value of these refutations.

1.1.5.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of error

This section has three parts: the refutation of the grasping of permanence as essentially erroneous, the refutation of the grasping of impermanence as essentially nonerroneous, and the refutation of the essential existence of mere grasping.

1.1.5.2.1.1 Refutation of the grasping of permanence as essentially erroneous

> 13. If to grasp onto the view
> "The impermanent is permanent" were an error,
> Since that which is empty is not impermanent,
> How could that grasping be an error?

In this context there are four errors: regarding the five impermanent aggregates, which cease to exist every moment, as permanent; regarding the suffering appropriated aggregates as happy; grasping the impure body as pure; and grasping the aggregates, the characteristics of which are heterogeneous with those of self, as the self. These four are the causes of confusion. As far as self-grasping is concerned, earlier similar episodes of ignorance give rise to later episodes. The other three also constitute supporting conditions of confusion.

Suppose one asserted that grasping the impermanent aggregates, which are empty of permanence, as permanent is erroneous. Then, since the aggregates, which are empty of inherent existence, are not inherently impermanent, how could grasping them as permanent be essentially erroneous? It could not be!

[389] We can treat the other three in the same way, *mutatis mutandis:*

> If to grasp onto the view
> "That which is suffering is happy" were an error,
> Since that which is empty is not suffering,
> How could that grasping be an error?

The other two great commentaries read this verse as follows:

> If to grasp onto the view
> "The impermanent is permanent" were an error,

Since that which is empty is not permanent,
How could that grasping not be an error? [*Buddhapālita* 268a, *Prajñāpradīpa* 223a][3]

1.1.5.2.1.2 Refutation of the grasping of permanence as essentially nonerroneous

14. If to grasp onto the view
"The impermanent is permanent" were an error,
Why is grasping onto the view
"That which is empty is impermanent" not an error?

Suppose one asserted that grasping that which is impermanent as permanent were erroneous. Then, since things that do not exist essentially are not essentially impermanent, how could grasping that which is essentially empty as impermanent be essentially nonerroneous? It could not be!

This is an argument according to which if the cognitive process grasping impermanence were essentially nonerroneous, then impermanence would have to be an essentially nonerroneous object of knowledge. So with respect to the aggregates, neither permanence nor impermanence is an inherently nonerroneous object of knowledge; and apart from these two, there are no other inherently nonerroneous objects of knowledge. Since there are none, with respect to what could that essentially nonerroneous object of knowledge be erroneous? We can treat the other three in the same way, *mutatis mutandis*:

If to grasp onto the view
"That which is suffering is happy" were an error,
Why is grasping onto the view,
"That which is empty is suffering" not an error?

This is an argument to the effect that if grasping permanence were essentially erroneous, then grasping impermanence would have to be essentially nonerroneous.

1.1.5.2.1.3 Refutation of the essential existence of mere grasping

Suppose someone argued as follows: Although grasping permanence is not essentially erroneous, mere grasping exists essentially. **[390]** In this context,

3. The extant Sanskrit version of the verse in *Prasannapadā / Anitye nityamityevaṁ yadi grāho viparyayaḥ/ Nānityam vidyate śūnye kuto grāho viparyayaḥ//* supports the sDe dge Tibetan translation of *Prasannapadā* and of the root text which reads */gal te mi rtag rtag pa zhes/de ltar 'dzin pa log yin na/stong la mi rtag yod min pas/ 'dzin pa ji ltar log pa yin//*. Bhāvaviveka and Buddhapālita must have been working from another recension of the root text as they have */gal te mi rtag rtag pa zhes/de ltar 'dzin pa log yin na/stong la rtag pa yod min pas/'dzin pa ji ltar log ma yin//*.

grasping has the nature of being an action. Moreover, it must undoubtedly have an instrument such as permanence, an agent such as the self or the mind, and objects such as material form as the ground of its existence. Since these exist essentially, my assertion has been proven!

> 15. That by means of which there is grasping, and the grasping,
> And the grasper, and all that is grasped:
> All are being alleviated.
> It follows that there is no grasping.

The instrument by means of which there is grasping; the grasping that is the action; the agent of the grasping; and the object that is grasped: All are being completely alleviated. That is, they are essentially non-arisen. Therefore, mere grasping does not exist essentially. The nonexistence of the instrument has already been demonstrated through

> If to grasp onto the view
> "The impermanent is permanent" were an error,
> Since that which is empty is not impermanent,
> How could that grasping be an error? [13]

The nonexistence of the agent has already been demonstrated through

> The self's existence or nonexistence
> Has in no way been established.
> Without that, how could the afflictions'
> Existence or nonexistence be established? [3]

The nonexistence of the object of grasping has already been demonstrated through

> Material form, sound, taste, touch,
> Smell, and cognitive objects: These six
> Are thought of as the foundation of
> Desire, aversion, and confusion. [7]

Alternately, in such places as the first chapter, instrument, entity, agent, and object have all been shown to be non-arisen; so there is no grasping.

1.1.5.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of one who has error

Now suppose someone said that error exists essentially, because Lehjin, who commits errors, exists essentially. This refutation has three parts: the refutation of the essential existence of the possessor in virtue of the essencelessness of

the possessed phenomena, the refutation of the essential existence of the basis of error, and the refutation of error arising essentially.

1.1.5.2.2.1 Refutation of the essential existence of the possessor in virtue of the essencelessness of the possessed phenomena

16. Since there is no grasping,
Whether erroneous or correct,
Who will come to be in error?
Who will have no error?

Since, as has been explained earlier, the components of grasping, including the instrument, the agent, and the object, all lack essence, and since there is no essentially existent grasping, whether erroneous or correct—that is, nonerroneous—who, that is, what person as a basis, could be essentially in error, or who could essentially have no error? There is no one!

1.1.5.2.2.2 Refutation of the essential existence of the basis of error

17. One who is already in error
Cannot commit error.
One who is not in error
Cannot commit error.

Moreover, if one maintained that error is in the person as the basis, **[391]** one could not escape from three alternatives, such as its being in one who has already come to be in error. It is impossible for one who is already in error to commit error, because if that were possible, then the error in virtue of which one is said to be grasping erroneously would have to be different from the error one commits. But this just is not necessary.

One who is not in error cannot commit error because the absurd consequence would follow that even a buddha could commit error.

18. One who is committing error
Cannot commit error.
Who can commit error?
Examine this on your own!

It is impossible for one who is committing error to commit error essentially, because apart from the act of committing error that has disintegrated

and the act of committing error that is yet to arise, there is no essentially existing error. The one who is committing error would be partly in error and partly not in error, and this is not free of the problems demonstrated in the previous two analyses.

Therefore, since error does not exist essentially in a basis in any of the three temporal periods, in what basis is it possible for error to exist essentially? You should analyze this with an impartial mind.

1.1.5.2.2.3 Refutation of error arising essentially

> 19. If error is not arisen,
> How could it come to exist?
> If error has not arisen,
> How could one be in error?

Moreover, since errors are not essentially arisen, how could they be essentially existent? They could not! Since errors are not essentially arisen, how could a person be one who is essentially in error? One could not be!

> 20. Since an entity does not arise from itself,
> Nor from another,
> Nor from another and itself,
> How could one be in error?

The reason that they are not essentially arisen is this: Since no entity—such as error—arises from itself or from another or from both self and other, error does not exist essentially. So how could the person who is in error exist essentially? He could not!

1.1.5.2.3 Refutation through examination of whether or not the object of error exists

> 21. If the self and the pure,
> The permanent and happiness existed,
> The self, the pure, the permanent,
> And happiness would not be erroneous.

If the self, the pure, the permanent, and happiness existed essentially, it would follow that they would not be erroneous objects of knowledge **[392]** just like such things as selflessness. This example demonstrates the *mere existence* of the others.

> 22. If the self and the pure,
> The permanent and happiness did not exist,
> The nonself, the impure, the impermanent,
> And suffering would not exist.

If the self, the pure, the permanent, and happiness were essentially nonexistent, the nonself, the impure, the impermanent, and suffering would also be essentially nonexistent, because in the absence an object of negation, its negation cannot be truly existent. Since the selfless does not exist inherently, the essential existences of the four, including selflessness, are also erroneous objects of knowledge, just as such things as the self are. Therefore, those who aspire to liberation should eliminate all eight errors.

1.1.5.2.4 Demonstration of the great value of these refutations

> 23. Thus through eliminating the errors
> Ignorance is eliminated.
> When ignorance is eliminated,
> Such things as the actions are eliminated.

As we explained earlier, the rational inquiry into whether or not error exists inherently is very important. This, as we have also previously explained, is because the practitioner eliminates the errors through not objectifying them. Through their elimination, the ignorance they cause is also eliminated. When ignorance is eliminated, all of the limbs of cyclic existence, including the actions, are eliminated because they are all caused by ignorance.

1.2 Refutation of the essential existence of the methods of their elimination as arguments for their existence

Suppose someone argued as follows: Since the elimination of such things as ignorance exists essentially, the afflictions exist essentially. Therefore, the continuum of cyclic existence exists essentially.

> 24. If any afflictions of anyone
> Existed essentially,
> How could they be relinquished?
> Who could relinquish the existent?

If the elimination of the afflictions existed essentially, this would indeed be the case, but it is not. If any affliction of any person existed essentially, then how could it be eliminated through the antidote? It could not. What path could

eliminate that which is essentially existent? That is to say, it could not be eliminated, because essence cannot be changed.

> 25. If any afflictions of anyone
> Were essentially nonexistent,
> How could they be relinquished?
> Who could relinquish the nonexistent?

If any afflictions of any person were essentially nonexistent **[393]**, how could they be eliminated? They could not be, because on the view according to which things exist through their own characteristics, if something is essentially nonexistent, then it would be absolutely nonexistent. By what antidote could the absolutely nonexistent be eliminated? Nobody can undo the coldness of fire!

Although in our own system, it is completely tenable that an antidote can eliminate that which is to be eliminated in the context of *essencelessness*, when demonstrating to the opponent that it is not tenable in the context of *essential existence* for such a thing to be eliminated, they are charged with errors in two ways: the one previously explained and the one according to which they accept elimination through its own characteristic. One should understand that these modes apply in all similar cases.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that the arguments that establish that the afflictions such as desire have causes and conditions and that objects such as permanence and impermanence as well as their subjects are essenceless can also be corroborated by profound sūtras, and that all of those discussions are explained by this chapter. The *Sthirādhyāśāyaparivarta-sūtra* says,

> Son of noble lineage! Certain bikshus, bikshunis upāsakas, and upāsikās consider unarisen phenomena—those which have not come into existence—to be unpleasant. Those who consider them to be impermanent, suffering, empty, and selfless also see them in the same way. I do not say that these idiots are meditating on the path. Instead I say that they have fallen completely into error. [*mDo sde* dza 165b]

It then presents the following example: A person sees an illusory woman and mistakes her for a real woman and desire arises. The person then contemplates the unpleasantness of women [ibid.]. Then it says

> Son of noble lineage: Foolish common people who do not know the end of desire **[394]** and who fear the end of desire nonetheless

> search for the end of desire. Not knowing the end of aversion to be endless, fearing the end of aversion, they nonetheless seek the end of endless aversion. Not knowing the end of confusion to be empty of ends, they fear the end of confusion; nonetheless, they seek the end of that which is empty of ends. I do not say that these idiots are meditating on the path. Instead I say that have fallen completely into error. [166a]

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

So, according to those who think that things exist through their own characteristics, it is not possible that afflictions arise from such things as pleasant objects and from conceptualizing them; nor can they distinguish between the erroneous and the nonerroneous in the context of grasping things as permanent, etc.; nor can they abandon the afflictions. One should ascertain, however, that for those according to whom things are empty of inherent existence, all of this is completely tenable.

This is the commentary on the twenty-third chapter, having twenty-five verses, called "the examination of errors."

CHAPTER XXIV

Examination of the Four Noble Truths

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 The objection
    1.1.1 The objection that such things as arising and cessation are not tenable
      1.1.1.1 The objection that action and agent are not tenable in the context of the Four Noble Truths
      1.1.1.2 The objection that the stream-enterers, and those who enjoy the fruits would not be tenable
      1.1.1.3 The objection that the three jewels would not be tenable
    1.1.2 The objection that such things as actions and their effects are not tenable
  1.2 The reply
    1.2.1 Showing that the opponent's argument is advanced without understanding the way dependent origination is in reality
      1.2.1.1 How we show that we do not commit the errors with which he charges us
        1.2.1.1.1 The reason that we do not commit those errors
          1.2.1.1.1.1 Showing that their argument rests on not understanding three things
          1.2.1.1.1.2 Showing that their argument rests on not understanding the two truths
            1.2.1.1.1.2.1 The nature of the two truths that is not understood
              1.2.1.1.1.2.1.1 Explanation of the literal meaning of the root text

1.2.3.4 Agent, action, and effects will make no sense
1.2.3.5 Mundane conventions will make no sense
1.2.3.6 Transcendental conventions will make no sense
1.2.4 Showing that to see the reality of dependent arising is to see the reality of the Four Noble Truths
2. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[394:15] We have now completed the second and final part of the presentation of the main point of the demonstration that the dependently originated is empty by nature: the detailed explanation of selflessness. We now begin the second part of the demonstration that the dependently originated is empty by nature: the rebuttal of refutations. This section has two parts: the examination of the Four Noble Truths and the examination of nirvana. This chapter constitutes the first section. It has two parts: the explanation of the chapter and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

This section has two parts: the objection and the reply.

1.1 The objection

This section has two parts: the objection that such things as arising and cessation are not tenable and the objection that such things as actions and their effects are not tenable.

1.1.1 The objection that such things as arising and cessation are not tenable

This section has three parts: The objection that actions and agents are not tenable in the context of the Four Noble Truths, the objection that stream-enterers, and those who enjoy the fruits, would not be tenable, **[395]** and the objection that the three jewels would not be tenable.

1.1.1.1 The objection that action and agent are not tenable in the context of the Four Noble Truths

Suppose someone argued as follows: If you argue that all internal and external phenomena are empty of inherent existence, then you would commit many major errors. How does this go?

1. If all this is empty,
There would be neither arising nor ceasing,
And for you, it follows that
The Four Noble Truths do not exist.

If things were empty, they would be nonexistent. Therefore, like the son of a barren woman, they would not arise and would not cease. Therefore, no entities would arise or would cease. Without arising and cessation, then for you, who assert that things are empty, the absurd consequence would follow that the Four Noble Truths do not exist. This is because the five appropriated aggregates, to which previous causes give rise, instantiate the truth of suffering. But if there were no arising or cessation at all, they would not exist.

If the truth of suffering did not exist, the afflictions and actions, the origins from which the suffering aggregates arise, would not exist. And if there were no suffering, there would be no truth of cessation in virtue of which suffering ceases. And if there were no cessation of suffering, there could be no truth of the path—the eightfold path which leads to that cessation. And if that were the case, there would be no Four Noble Truths.

2. If the Four Noble Truths did not exist,
Then understanding, abandonment,
Meditation, and realization
Would not be tenable.

It would follow that neither the complete understanding of suffering, nor abandonment of the origin of suffering, nor meditation on the path, nor the realization of cessation would be tenable. This is because if there were none of the four actions such as the cultivation of understanding or abandonment, then none of the four kinds of agent, such as the cultivator of understanding, would be tenable. And that is because agents are inextricably related to actions.

1.1.1.2 The objection that the stream-enterers, and those who enjoy the fruits, would not be tenable

3. If these things did not exist,
The four fruits would not exist.
Without the four fruits, there would be no enjoyers of the fruits,
Nor would there be path-enterers.

Since there would be nothing such as the understanding of suffering, the four fruits would not exist. The fruits of the stream-enterers are these. First, the path of liberation—that is, subsequent insight into characteristics. That is the sixteenth moment of having abandoned the afflictions to be abandoned by

means of the path of seeing. Second is the abandonment of the fifth of the nine afflictions associated with the desire realm that are to be abandoned by means of the path of meditation—the three minor, three middle, and three major afflictions, but not the abandonment of the sixth. **[396]** According to *Abhidharmakośa,*

> The fruits are the produced and the unproduced. [VI: 51a]

The fruits of the once-returner are the path of liberation, having abandoned the sixth of the afflictions pertaining to the desire realm that are to be abandoned by means of the path of meditation, and the abandonment of that affliction. The fruits of the non-returners are the path of liberation having abandoned the afflictions that are to be abandoned by the path of seeing, and the ninth of the afflictions pertaining to the desire realm that are to be abandoned by means of the path of meditation, and the abandonment of that affliction. The fruits of the arhats are the path of liberation by means of which one has abandoned the ninth affliction pertaining to the peak of cyclic existence to be abandoned by means of the path of meditation, and its abandonment. This has just been a general discussion.

Without these four fruits, the enjoyers of those fruits—those four kinds of noble person who enjoy the fruits—would not exist. And if they did not exist, the four kinds of path-enterers—those noble persons—would not exist.

A stream-enterer is one who is passing through the fifteen moments of resoluteness and insight prior to the sixteenth moment of the path—subsequent insight—and who has not yet abandoned the sixth affliction pertaining to the desire realm to be abandoned on the path of meditation.

Resoluteness regarding insight into the characteristics of suffering phenomena is the path of confrontation which is the antidote to the ten afflictions pertaining to the suffering of the desire realm to be abandoned by means of the path of seeing: the view of the transitory aggregates, the extreme views, the false views, arrogance with regard to one's own view, arrogance regarding one's own propriety and conduct, doubt, desire, anger, pride, and ignorance. This path of confrontation that focuses on the truth of suffering in the desire realm develops the awareness of its aspects of impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and selflessness.

Insight into the characteristics of suffering is the path of liberation—that stage at which one has abandoned the ten afflictions that are to be abandoned, each of which has objects and aspects similar to those just mentioned. The path of resoluteness regarding subsequent insight into suffering is the path of confrontation that is the antidote to the eighteen afflictions of the two upper realms where, since there is no anger, there are only nine in each realm. The path that focuses on the suffering of the higher realms develops the awareness of the aspects mentioned above. The path of subsequent insight into suffering is **[397]** the path of liberation—that stage at which one has abandoned that

which is to be abandoned at this stage. The relevant objects and aspects are developed as mentioned above.

Resoluteness regarding insight into characteristics; insight into characteristics; resoluteness regarding subsequent insight into characteristics; and subsequent insight into characteristics pertain to the sources of suffering, and the truths of cessation and of the path. These three sets of four should be understood as they have been presented earlier. However, there are seven afflictions connected with the sources of suffering and seven connected with cessation that are to be abandoned through the path of seeing. That is, by excluding both of the first two views, and the last view, seven remain. There are eight afflictions—excluding the first two views—connected with the path that are to be abandoned through the path of seeing. These eighty-eight afflictions are known as the afflictions to be abandoned on the path of seeing because they can be abandoned simply through direct perception of the truth without further meditation on the truth that one has already directly perceived.

The afflictions to be abandoned through the path of meditation are those abandoned meditating on the truth after having directly perceived it. They are the four—desire, anger, pride and ignorance—pertaining to the desire realm, and three each—excluding anger—pertaining to the form and the formless realms. Thus there are ten. These ten are associated with the nine grounds—the desire realm, the four stages of concentration, and the four formless realms. Multiplying as we did earlier, we get ninety. And each of these afflictions has two antidotes: the path of confrontation and the path of liberation.

One on the path to being a once-returner is one who, after passing through the path of seeing, is on the path in order to enjoy the fruit of being a once-returner and who is engaged in the relevant practices. One on the path to being a non-returner[1] is an ārya who, having abandoned the sixth affliction of the desire realm to be abandoned through the path of meditation but who has yet to pass onto the path of liberation that is the antidote to the ninth affliction of the desire realm to abandoned through the path of meditation, is on the path in order to enjoy the fruit of being a non-returner and who is engaged in the relevant practices. The explanation in the *Commentary* follows the order in which the fruits are enjoyed in sequence [160b]. One on the path to being an ārhat[2] is one who, having eliminated the ninth affliction of the desire realm to be abandoned through the path of meditation, but who has yet to eliminate the ninth affliction of the peak of cyclic existence to be abandoned on the path of liberation **[398]** and who is on the path in order to obtain the fruit of being an arhat, and is engaged in the relevant practices.

1. The subject clause is supplied here, but is missing in extant recensions of the text. It is clearly indicated both by context and by the corresponding section of *Prasannapadā* [160b] where a less elaborate but consistent definition is provided. This appears to be an early scribal error.

2. The subject is again supplied. See previous footnote.

1.1.1.3 The objection that the three jewels would not be tenable

4. If so, without the eight kinds of person,
There would be no sangha.
If the Four Noble Truths do not exist,
There can be no exalted Dharma.

If the eight kinds of person—the four who enjoy the fruits and the four who have entered the path—did not exist, the jewel of the sangha would not exist. If, since the Four Noble Truths did not exist, the eight kinds of person did not exist, then there would not be the exalted Dharma that is the Dharma of the āryas.

Cessation is the fruit and the path is that by means of which one approaches it, and it itself is the realized Dharma. The teaching that elucidates these is the articulated Dharma.

5. If there is no Dharma and sangha,
How can there be a Buddha?
If emptiness is construed in this way,
The existence of the three jewels is undermined.

If there is no exalted Dharma, how could there be Buddha? There could not be, because a Buddha arises as a result of absorbing all of the Dharma, through great exertion in accordance with the exalted Dharma.

If there were no sangha, how could there be a Buddha? There could not be, for four distinct reasons. First, buddhahood must be obtained through the accumulation of wisdom through receiving teachings from members of the sangha through the accumulation of merit through such things as offerings and service to the sangha, and through taking refuge in the sangha. Second, without a sangha, there would be no such practitioners as stream-enterers. Without attaining these stages first, buddhahood cannot be attained, because undoubtedly the transcendent lord has attained at least some of these other fruits. Third, the transcendent lord himself constitutes a sangha of one who requires no more training, because some schools assert that such beings as the Buddha are themelves communities comprising a single monk; it is clear that according to such a system there can be no buddha without a sangha. Fourth, those who follow the Madhyama-āgama maintain that according to the accounts of the grounds in *Mahāvastu* [I: 57], **[399]** the bodhisattva who has attained the first ground—that is, who has attained the path of seeing—is included in the sangha. On this account also, this point is very clear. These are the arguments of the śrāvaka schools, and so they are presented here as they propound them.

Therefore, if the meaning of emptiness is expounded in this way, you will

have undermined the existence of the three jewels—the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. They are called the jewels then, because of the difficulty of finding them and their rare occurrence, because those with little merit will not meet with them, and because they are very precious.

1.1.2 The objection that such things as actions and their effects are not tenable

> 6. Hence you also undermine the existence of the fruits;
> As well as the profane:
> The Dharma itself;
> And all mundane conventions.

Moreover, if you explain the emptiness of all phenomena of existence through their own characteristics in this way, since "all" includes both the pleasant and unpleasant effects of the profane—that is, the nonvirtuous—and the Dharma—that is, the virtuous—respectively, there would be no such effects. This would also contradict the existence of such mundane conventions such as saying "Eat!" "Sit!" and "Go!" as these also are included under "all." Thus, they say, the way emptiness is presented here is infelicitous.

This argument presupposes that from chapter one through twenty-three. When it is established through arguments that no internal and external phenomena have any essence through their own characteristics, the rational analysis with respect to their existence or nonexistence in reality refutes all agents and actions including arising, cessation, bondage, and liberation.

1.2 The reply

This section has four parts: showing that the opponent's argument is advanced without understanding the way dependent origination is in reality, the presentation of our own explanation of emptiness as the meaning of dependent origination, why for those who do not accept this, no ontological framework is tenable, and showing that to see the reality of dependent arising is to see the reality of the Four Noble Truths.

1.2.1 Showing that the opponent's argument is advanced without understanding the way dependent origination is in reality

[400] This section has two parts: how we show that we do not commit the errors with which he charges us and how we show that he himself commits those errors.

1.2.1.1 How we show that we do not commit the errors with which he charges us

This section has three parts: the reason that we do not commit those errors, the principal demonstration that we do not commit those errors, and how our system is not only nonerroneous but also beneficial.

1.2.1.1.1 The reason that we do not commit those errors

This section has two parts: showing that their argument rests on not understanding three things and showing that their argument rests on not understanding the two truths.

1.2.1.1.1.1 Showing that their argument rests on not understanding three things

> 7. Here we say that you do not understand
> Emptiness, or the purpose of emptiness,
> Or the meaning of emptiness.
> As a consequence you are harmed by it.

Now we begin the presentation of the responses to those arguments. Since you have neither understood the purpose of the teaching of emptiness, nor the nature of emptiness, nor the meaning of emptiness that must be grasped in order to explain emptiness, you yourself are harmed, because you are corrupted by various erroneous conceptions. Entirely through your own misconception, you have misconstrued the meaning of emptiness—essencelessness, that is, the emptiness of inherent existence—as nonexistence. So when you argue,

> If all this is empty,
> There would be neither arising nor ceasing.

and attack us, by your distaste for us, you yourself are harmed.

As it was said earlier,

> These come from mental fabrication.
> Fabrication ceases through emptiness. [XVIII: 5cd]

It is explained that emptiness is presented in order to pacify fabrication, which is the grasping of things through mental representations. But you take the meaning of "emptiness of essence" to be *nonexistence*. So you simply extend

the network of mental fabrications. Therefore you do not understand the purpose of the teaching of emptiness.

The nature of emptiness is

> Not dependent on another, peaceful and
> Not fabricated by mental fabrications. [XVIII: 9ab]

From the perspective of direct perception, the nature of reality is as follows: Just as, when one does not have cataracts, not even the mere appearance of fallings hairs is seen, **[401]** all fabrication of dualistic appearance is terminated. Since according to you, the meaning of "emptiness of essence" is taken to be *nonexistence*, it would be inconsistent to say that it terminates all fabrications. Therefore, you do not understand the characteristics or nature of emptiness.

As we will see, in

> Whatever is dependently originated
> We explain to be emptiness, [XXIV: 18ab]

and as it is said in sūtra,

> Whatever is arisen from conditions is unarisen.
> [*Anavataptanāgarājaparipṛcchā-sūtra, mDo sde* pha 230b]

These explain that the meaning of "emptiness" is *being dependent on conditions*—that is, being essentially unable to stand on one's own. Thus the very meaning of "dependent origination" is the same as the meaning "emptiness of essence." But the nonexistence of things that are able to perform functions is not at all the meaning of "emptiness." But you, on the other hand, argue, thinking that if things were empty of essential existence, then nothing would be able to perform a function; and construing *nonexistence* as the meaning of "emptiness of essence." So you do not even understand the meaning of the word "emptiness."

These arguments show that for the opponent to say that if things are essenceless they could not exist, thinking that for things not to exist essentially is for them not to exist at all, is to present an argument advanced by someone who does not understand the meaning of the middle way. Therefore it makes no sense for those who aspire to hold the mādhyamika's position to say such things.

1.2.1.1.1.2 Showing that their argument rests on not understanding the two truths

This section has five parts: the nature of the two truths that is not understood, why if you do not understand the two truths you do not understand the essence

of the scriptures, the necessity of presenting the two truths, the error of misapprehending the two truths, and the reason the teacher did not teach the two truths at first in view of the difficulty of understanding them.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1 The nature of the two truths that is not understood

This section has two parts: the explanation of the literal meaning of the root text and showing that one must ascertain the meaning as it is explained in the *Commentary*.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.1 Explanation of the literal meaning of the root text

[402] Suppose someone asked, "Who is it that argues without understanding the purpose of emptiness as explained by the mādhyamika?"

> 8. The Buddha's teaching of the Dharma
> Is based on two truths:
> A truth of worldly convention,
> And an ultimate truth.

Those who present the above arguments are adherents of our own schools. They are merely interested in reciting the scriptures but do not have a nonerroneous understanding of the distinction between the two truths as it is explained in the scriptures. Therefore, the noble Nāgārjuna, in order to dispel others' misunderstandings of the meaning of the scriptures, and in order to set out nonerroneously the presentation of the two truths in the scriptures, says that the Dharma taught by the transcendent buddhas is based entirely on the two truths: a truth of worldly convention and an ultimate truth.

Here, "world" refers to the person that is designated on the basis of the aggregates. This is because, as it is said,

> The world is dependent on
> That world that is known as the aggregates.
> [*Brahmaviśeṣccintiparipṛcchā-sūtra, mDo sde* ba, 36b]

Thus it is said that that which depends on the transitory aggregates is the world.[3]

"Convention" refers to lack of understanding, or ignorance; that is, that

3. In Tibetan there is a close lexical relationship between the phrases "depending on the transitory aggregates" (*'jig pa phung po la brten pa*), and "world" (*'jig rten*). In Sanskrit as well, world *loka* (world) has as its root *luj* which means to disintegrate. Tsong khapa is referring to these lexical relationships.

which obscures or conceals the way things really are.[4] This is explained in this way as the Sanskrit term for "convention," *saṁvṛti,* can mean *concealment* as well. But not *all* conventions are said to be concealers.

Alternatively, "convention" can be taken to mean *mutually dependent*. Since things must be mutually dependent, the meaning of "untrue" is that they do not essentially have the ability to stand on their own. This approach to explaining the meaning of the word is applicable to "ultimate truth" as well; but the word "conventional" is not used to refer to it. This is like, for example, the word "grown-from-the-lake" which is literally applicable to a frog but is not used to refer to a frog.[5]

Alternatively, "convention" can be taken to mean *signifier*, that is, mundane nominal convention. **[403]** Convention in this sense is also said to be characterized by expressions and the objects of expressions, awareness and objects of awareness, etc. Therefore, "subjective convention" does not refer merely to expressions or to awareness.

Suppose one asked, "Does not the use of 'mundane' in the expression 'mundane convention' mean that there is convention that is not mundane?" Here the word "mundane" is not used to exclude some nonmundane convention. It just expresses the way things exist. In other words, those whose perceptions are erroneous because of deterioration of the sense faculties due to such things as cataracts, growths on the eye, or jaundice do not constitute the world from the perspective of which things are regarded as conventionally real. Therefore, those perceptual objects affected by sense faculties which are affected by such things as cataracts are not regarded as real according to mundane convention. Therefore, in order to distinguish it from these, the word "truth" is qualified in the expression "mundane conventional truth."

Since it is a *fact* and it is *supreme*, it is called the ultimate.[6] It is true because it is not deceptive from the perspective of those who perceive things as they really are.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2 Showing that one must ascertain the meaning as it is explained in the *Commentary*

As *Prasannapadā* says here [163b], the details of the the two truths can be understood through the presentation in *Madhyamakāvatāra*. A brief presen-

4. The word we are translating as "convention," *kun rdzob,* translates *saṁvṛti*, which has two principal meanings: convention in all of the senses common in English, as well as *concealment*, or *covering over*. Tsong khapa is associating these meanings, and pointing out that convention conceals or covers the nature of things.

5. "Grown from the lake" (*mtsho skyes*) is a term for the lotus.

6. "Ultimate" translates *don dam. Don* means *fact* and *dam* means *supreme*, so lexically, "ultimate" in Tibetan is a compound of *supreme fact*. The same etymology is present in the Sanskrit *paramārtha*.

tation follows. Objects of knowledge constitute the basis of division of the two truths. The conventional truth and the ultimate truth are the entities that are the divisions of objects of knowledge. In order to understand these divisions, three topics must be addressed: conventional truth, the explanation of ultimate truth, and the presentation of the enumeration of the two truths.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.1 Conventional truth

This section has three parts: the explanation of the etymologies of "conventional" and "truth," the characteristic of conventional truth, and the classifications of conventional truth.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.1.1 Explanation of the etymologies of "conventional" and "truth"

Suppose someone asks, "What is convention and what is truth?" **[404]** The convention from the perspective of which such things as form are posited as true is the ignorance which fabricates the essential existence of phenomena which do not inherently exist. This is because since it is not possible for things to truly exist, it is only from the perspective of mind that things can be posited as truly existent; and from the perspective of the mind that does not grasp things as truly existent nothing is posited as truly existent. Thus *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> Since the nature of confusion is to veil, it is obscurational.[7]
> That which is created by it appears to be truly existent.
> The sage has said that that is the obscurational truth.
> Created phenomena are obscurational. [VI: 28]

Here *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says,

> Obscurational truth is posited due to the force of afflictive ignorance, which constitutes the limbs of cyclic existence. The śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas, who have abandoned afflictive ignorance, see compounded phenomena, to be like reflections, to have the nature of being created; but these are not truths for them

7. Candrakīrti (and Tsong khapa) is/are glossing the Sanskrit term *saṁvṛti* and the common Tibetan translation *kun rdzob*. The Sanskrit has a wide range of lexical meaning, including *ordinary, everyday, nominal, and by agreement,* but also *concealed, occluded, covered*. The Tibetan *kun rdzob,* though it also covers all of these senses, has as its primary lexical connotation *disguised*. Here Candrakīrti is explaining that the conventional obscures its ultimate nature. We will usually translate k*in* rd*zob* as *conventional* except when this connotation is essential, in which reserve use *abstractional*.

> because they are not fixated on things as true. Fools are deceived, but for those others—just like an illusion—in virtue of being dependently originated, they are merely obscurational. [*dBu ma* 'a 255a]

This does not demonstrate that those who posit the existence of obscurational truth posit through ignorance, nor that from the perspective of the śrāvakas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas, who have abandoned afflictive ignorance, it is not posited as conventional truth. The reason for the first is that, as has been previously explained, since it is through afflictive ignorance that one grasps things as truly existent, the object that is thereby grasped cannot possibly exist even conventionally, and whatever is an obscurational truth must exist conventionally. **[405]** Thus, the obscuration on the basis of which phenomena are posited as obscurationally existent cannot be the obscuration that is regarded as afflictive ignorance.

The reason for the second is that for those who have abandoned the obscuration of afflictive ignorance—because of the absence of that obscuration in virtue of which they take things as real, from the perspective in which things are posited as truly existent—compounded phenomena are established as not being truths from their perspective, but it is not established that they are not obscurational truths. Thus, when it is said that compounded phenomena are merely obscurational from their perspective, the word "mere" excludes *truth* but in no way excludes *obscurational truth,* because, of the two—that is, "obscurational" and "truth"—truth is not possible. Thus, the sense in which the obscurational truth is true is that it is true merely from the perspective of ignorance—that is, obscuration.

As Candrakīrti's treatise says, "Since it is obscurationally true, it is obscurational truth." [*Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* 254b] This means that conventional truth is that which is true from the perspective of ignorance—obscuration—but not that it is truly existent from the standpoint of nominal convention. Otherwise, this would be inconsistent with the system according to which nothing exists through its own characteristic even conventionally. Since the refutation of true existence and the proof of the absence of true existence are presented through nominal convention, it is not tenable that their true existence is posited through nominal convention. If they were not so presented, they could not be presented ultimately, either, and it would follow that *no framework* would be coherent.

Suppose someone thought, "In that case, since reality and the two selves are truths from the perspective of the obscuration through which one grasps true existence, they must be conventional truths." If conventional truth were posited only from the perspective of the obscuration through which one grasps true existence, this would be the case. But we do not say this. Here we merely explained that the basis of the truth of conventional truth is that obscuration

from the perspective of which anything is true, and the sense in which it is true from that perspective.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.1.2 The characteristic of conventional truth

[406] Each of the internal and external phenomena has two natures: an ultimate and a conventional nature. The sprout, for instance, has a nature that is found by a rational cognitive process, which sees the real nature of the phenomenon as it is, and a nature that is found by a conventional cognitive process, which perceives deceptive or unreal objects. The former nature is the ultimate truth of the sprout; the latter nature is the conventional truth of the sprout. Concerning this, *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> Through seeing all phenomena both as real and as unreal,
> The two natures of the objects that are found are grasped.
> The object of the perception of reality is the way things really are.
> That which is seen falsely is called the conventional truth. [VI: 23]

This shows that, from among the two natures of the sprout—the two truths about the sprout—the ultimate nature of the sprout is found by the former cognitive process and the conventional nature is found by the latter cognitive process. But this does *not* show that a *single* nature is in fact two truths in virtue of the two *perspectives* of the former and latter cognitive processes. *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says,

> It has been shown that each phenomenon has its own two natures—a conventional and an ultimate nature. [*dBu ma* 'a 253a]

It thus says that each phenomenon has two natures, and the ultimate is the one that is found by the cognitive process that apprehends reality, and the conventional is the one that is found by the cognitive process that perceives that which is unreal.

Since the reality of the sprout is its essence, it is called its nature. Since such things as the shape and color of the sprout are also called its identity, they are also called its nature. In order to ascertain a pot for instance, as a deceptive or unreal object, it is necessary to develop the view that refutes, through a rational cognitive process, the object of fixation that is that object grasped as truly existent. This is because without having rationally refuted its true existence, its unreality is not established by authoritative cognition. So for the mind to establish anything as an object of conventional truth, **[407]** it must depend on the refutation of its ultimate existence.

Although such things as pots and cloth are conventional truths, when they are perceived by the mind, the mind does not necessarily perceive the meaning of "conventional truth." This is because, although such things as pots and

cloths, appear like illusions, although they do not exist essentially, the mind that perceives them does not necessarily perceive the fact that they are like illusions. Therefore, it is not reasonable to say that such things as pots and cloths are conventional truths from the perspective of the common people who do not have the madhyamaka view, but that they are ultimate truths from the perspective of the āryas, because this would contradict the following statement in *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* which says,

> Whatever is ultimate for ordinary beings is merely conventional for the āryas who are engaged with appearances. The essence of conventional phenomena, which is emptiness, is the ultimate for them. [*dBu ma* 'a 255a]

Ordinary beings grasp such things as pots as truly existent, and grasp them as ultimately existent as well. Therefore from the perspective of their minds, such things as pots are ultimately existent, but they are not conventional objects. These things, such as pots, which are ultimately existent from their perspective, are conventional objects from the perspective of the āryas, to whom things appear as illusionlike. Since they cannot be posited as truly existent as they are apprehended by an āryan consciousness, they are referred to as merely conventional.

However, since their nature is said to be ultimate truth, it should be asserted, with this distinction in mind, that such things as pots are conventional but their nature, as the āryas grasp it, is ultimate; but one should *not* assert that such things as pots are ultimates for the āryas, because the āryas' rational minds, which see reality, do not find things such as pots and because it is said that the distinctive characteristic of the ultimate truth is that it is found by **[408]** the rational mind that sees reality.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.1.3 Classifications of conventional truth

There are two kinds of cognitive processes that perceive unreal deceptive objects: the cognitive process associated with an acute sensory faculty, which is not impaired by any extraneous causes of misperception such as cataracts, and the cognitive process associated with a defective sensory faculty impaired by extraneous causes of misperception. In comparison to the previous one, the latter is regarded as a fallacious cognitive process. *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> It is asserted that there are two kinds of perceptions of the false:
> That by acute sensory faculties and that by defective sensory faculties.
> The cognitive processes of those who have defective senses
> Are erroneous in comparison to those of persons with acute senses.
> [VI: 24]

Just as there are two kinds of faculty—nonerroneous and erroneous—their objects are said to be of two corresponding kinds—unreal and real: the objects that are grasped by the cognitive processes associated with the six faculties that are unimpaired by extraneous causes of misperception and the objects that are grasped by the cognitive processes associated with the six faculties that are impaired by extraneous causes of misperception, respectively. Here *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> That which is perceived by ordinary people
> By being grasped through unimpaired sense faculties
> Is regarded by ordinary people as real.
> All the rest is said to be unreal. [VI: 25]

The internal impairments of the sense faculties are such things as cataracts, jaundice, and such things as hallucinogenic drugs one has consumed. The external impairments of the sense faculties are such things as mirrors, the echoing of sound in a cave, and the rays of the autumn sun falling on such things as white sand. Even without the internal impairments, these can become the causes of grasping such things as mirages, reflections, and echoes as water, etc. **[409]** Magicians' mantras and potions should be understood similarly.

The impairments of the mental faculty are, in addition to these, such things as erroneous philosophical views, fallacious arguments, and sleep. Thus, the impairments such as ignorance with regard to the two kinds of self-grasping that develop from beginningless time are not treated as causal impairments in this context. Rather, as we previously explained, the occasional extraneous causes of misperception in the faculties are treated as impairments in this context.

Taking conventional objects grasped by such unimpaired and impaired cognitive faculties to be real or unreal, respectively, merely conforms to ordinary cognitive practice. This is because they actually exist as they appear or do not, according whether or not they are undermined by ordinary cognition. This distinction between the real and the unreal is not drawn from the perspective of the āryas. This is because just as such things as reflections do not exist as they appear, such things as blue, that appear to exist through their own characteristics to those who are affected by ignorance do not actually exist as they appear. Therefore there is no distinction between those two kinds of cognitive faculties in terms of whether or not they are erroneous.

Now, suppose someone asks: Unreal objects appear in virtue of the extraneous impairment of the sense faculties and in virtue of the impairment of the mind due to such things as sleep, such things as the appearance of men in dreams being taken to be such things as men. When one is awake, the appearance of illusory horses and elephants are taken to be horses and elephants and mirages are taken to be water. All of these can be recognized to be erroneous even by an ordinary cognitive agent. However, how are the unreal

objects perceived in virtue of the impairment of the mind by bad philosophy recognized as erroneous by ordinary cognitive agents?

[410] The impairment regarding the existence or nonexistence of which we are inquiring is not an innate erroneous grasping. Therefore, fabrication through bad philosophy merely affects those who have been indoctrinated by bad philosophy such as the doctrine of a universal principle. These cannot be recognized as erroneous by *ordinary* cognitive agents. However, since they are recognized as erroneous even by those who have not approached an understanding of the way things really are through conventional authoritative cognition, they are recognized as erroneous by *mundane* cognitive agents.

Objects like those grasped by the two innate self-graspings are called "those grasped by unimpaired faculties." Although these may be taken to be true from the perspective of an ordinary cognitive agent, they do not exist conventionally. Those svātantrika-mādhyamikas according to whom consciousness appears to exist through its own characteristic, and is ascertained to exist as it appears, do not distinguish between the real and the unreal in terms of cognitive subjects. However, they distinguish between the real and the unreal on the basis of whether or not the object exists through its own characteristic in the way it appears, as *Satyadvaya-vibhāga* says:

> Although they are similar in appearance,
> Based on whether or not it can perform a function
> The conventional is divided into
> The real and the unreal. [*dBu ma* sa 2a]

However, in our system, whatever appears to the ignorant to exist through its own characteristic is maintained to be an appearance polluted by ignorance. Therefore, there is no division of conventional objects into the real and the unreal. Here *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says,

> Whatever is conventionally false is not conventional truth. [*dBu ma* 'a 254b]

This statement means that from the perspective of the conventions of the ordinary person who has linguistic skills, things such as a reflected image of the face are not the real face. Therefore from that perspective, they are not even conventional truths. However, it is a conventional truth **[411]** in the sense that it is an object that is found by a cognitive agent which sees deceptive unreal objects. Nonetheless, just as the cognitive faculty to which the reflected image appears is erroneous with respect to the object that appears to it, the ignorant are in error with respect to the objects that appear to them, such as blueness, which appears to exist through its own characteristic.

To posit the perceptual object as real would contradict its being posited by an erroneous cognitive agent. On the other hand, to posit it as an unreal per-

ceptual object would support that. Otherwise, unreal objects, including illusions, would have to be posited as conventionally existent. In that case, conventional truth would not be possible, because if something is not true by nominal convention it would be contradictory for it to be conventionally true.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.2 The explanation of ultimate truth

This section has three parts: the explanation of the meanings of "ultimate" and "truth," the characteristic of ultimate truth, and the classifications of ultimate truth.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.2.1 Explanation of the meanings of "ultimate" and "truth"

Prasannapadā says,

> Since it is a fact [*don*] and it is supreme [*dam pa*] as well, it is ultimate [*don dam*]. And since *it* is true, it is the ultimate truth. [163b]

Therefore, Candrakīrti does not maintain, as do others, that the uncontaminated wisdom of meditative equipoise is the supreme and that the ultimate is its object. He instead maintains that "ultimate truth" indicates both that is a fact and that it is supreme.

The respect in which ultimate truth is a truth is that it is nondeceptive. It does not deceive ordinary beings by existing in one way and appearing in another. It is only posited as existing as ultimate truth through the power of mundane nominal conventions. This is because, as *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* says,

> Suppose some one asked, "In that case, why is nirvana said to be an ultimate truth?" Because it does not deceive ordinary beings regarding its mode of existence. Only through mundane nominal conventions is it said to exist as ultimate truth. Compounded phenomena, which are deceptive, are not ultimate truths. **[412]** Since three of the truths are compounded phenomena, they appear to have essence, although they do not. Therefore, since they deceive fools, they are regarded as conventional truths. [*dBu ma* ya 7b]

This is a response to the opponent's assertion that since nirvana is posited from the perspective of conventional truth it is not tenable that it is an ultimate truth [*Madhyamakāvatāra bhāṣya* 210a, 232a, 234a]. He asks, "Since *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* says,

When all of the victors have said
That nirvana is the only truth,
What wise man would think
That all of the rest is not false? [35]

how would you interpret the statement that nirvana is the only truth and that all of the rest are false?" The reply to this in the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* is as follows:

> What does it mean when the Transcendent Lord said, "Oh, monks! There is one supreme truth! That is nirvana, which is characterized as nondeceptive?"[8] Since compounded phenomena appear falsely, fools are deceived. Nirvana, however, is not like that. This is because its mode of existence is to always have the nature of being non-arisen. That does not appear to fools as do compounded phenomena, which have the nature of being arisen. Therefore, nirvana always exists just as nirvana; through mundane conventions it is known as the supreme truth. [*dBu ma* ya 22b][9]

Thus, since it is said that the meaning of "nondeceptive" is *true,* and since that is also the case according to nominal convention, and since the sūtras also say that the meaning of "nondeceptive phenomena" is *truth,* and since the meaning of "unreal" in "all compound phenomena are unreal, deceptive phenomena" is *deceptive,* the meaning of "true" should be understood as *nondeceptive.*

Thus, the "truth" in "conventional truth" **[413]** means *true from the perspective of grasping things as truly existent.* It does not have the same meaning as the "truth" in "ultimate truth." The statement in *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* that nirvana is conventionally a truth means that the existence of nirvana as an ultimate truth is posited from the perspective of obscuration, but it does not mean that it is a conventional truth.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.2.2 The characteristic of ultimate truth

This section has two parts: the main point and rebutting objections.

8. *Majjhimanikāya, Dhātuvibhaṅgasuttam Vol. 5,* 23, p. 1355. This quotation is repeated in several Mahāyāna sūtras: *Dharmasaṁgīti-sūtra* [*mDo sde* sha 6b], *Śrīmālādevisiṁhanāda-sūtra* [*dKon brtsegs* cha 272b], and *Vimaladatta-paripṛcchā-sūtra,* [*dKon brtsegs* ca 246b].

9. The sDe dge edition varies slightly from the edition Tsong khapa quotes: Nondeceptive nirvana is the only supreme truth:" *mi slu ba'i chos can mya ngan las 'das pa di nyid bden pa'i mphyog cig du'o* for *'di lta ste mi slu ba'i chos can mya ngan las 'das pa'o.* Due to the false appearance of compound phenomena fools are deceived. But nirvana is not like that, because it exists eternally, just by having the nature of being non-arisen. It does not even appear to fools, like produced phenomena, to have the nature of being arisen. Therefore, since nirvana eternally exists just as nirvana, it is said to be ultimately true just through mundane nominal conventions.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.2.2.1 The main point

According to *Madhyamakāvatāra,* the characteristic of ultimate truth is said to be that which is found through seeing the facticity of a genuine object of knowledge [VI: 23]. The autocommentary says,

> The ultimate is the nature that is found by being the object of a particular kind of wisdom of those who see reality. But it does not exist through its own nature. This is one of its natures. [*dBu ma* 'a 253a]

Since he says that it is found by the uncontaminated wisdom that perceives things as they really are, and does not exist inherently, he refutes those who say that anything that can be found by the uncontaminated wisdom of meditative equipoise is truly existent.

By saying "the particular kind of wisdom," he means that for the ultimate, it is not enough to be found by just any kind of ārya wisdom, but it must be found by the particular wisdom that knows things just as they are. The meaning of "to be found" is *to be established by that cognitive faculty*. The meaning is similar in the case of the conventional. The way in which it is found through this particular kind of wisdom is as follows: When the eye that is affected by cataracts sees hairs falling in empty space, the eye that is not affected by cataracts does not even see the appearance of falling hairs. In the same way, when those who are impaired by the cataracts of ignorance see such things as the inherent existence of the aggregates, that which is seen by those buddhas who are free of the latent potentials for ignorance and by those who have the uncontaminated wisdom that sees things just as they are, **[414]** just like that which is seen by eyes without cataracts, in virtue of not being seen to be even the slightest bit dualistic, is the ultimate truth. *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> Because of cataracts, unreal objects
> Such as falling hairs are mistakenly seen.
> Their reality is seen by healthy eyes.
> This should be understood similarly here. [VI: 29]

Here the autocommentary says,

> The nature of the aggregates that is seen by the transcendent buddhas, who are free from the latent potentials for ignorance, is the ultimate truth, just as the person without cataracts does not see the falling hairs. [*dBu ma* 'a 255b]

This says that the Buddha does not see the objects that are seen by those affected by the cataracts of ignorance through the wisdom by means of which he sees things as they really are, just as the person without cataracts does not see the falling hairs.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.2.2.2 Rebutting objections

This section has two parts: rebutting the refutation that says that it is not tenable that the way things really are can be perceived and rebutting the objection that that says that it is not tenable that empirical phenomena can be perceived.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.2.2.2.1 Rebutting the objection that says that it is not tenable that the way things really are can be perceived

Suppose someone argued as follows: You say that the Buddha found the ultimate truth through the wisdom by means of which he knows things just as they are. But consider the following statement in *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya*:

> Is it not the case that such a nature is not seen? Therefore, how could you say that they perceive this? Although this is correct as far as it goes, it is said that the manner in which they perceive it is by not perceiving. [*dBu ma* 'a 255b]

Thus it is explained that to perceive nothing is to perceive things as they really are. To confirm that, the statement that the ultimate truth transcends even the object of omniscient wisdom is quoted [256a, quoted from *Saṁvṛtiparamārthavidarśana-sūtra*]. And it is stated that all engagement of mind and mental episodes are terminated at the level of buddhahood. Why haven't have you contradicted all of these statements?

The statement that the manner in which they perceive it is by not perceiving **[415]** does not mean that no object whatever is seen. This is explained in the fifteenth chapter. In the *Saṁvṛtiparamārthavidarśana-sūtra* it says;

> Son of a god: Ultimate truth is the supreme aspect of things, and it transcends the duality of omniscient wisdom and its object. While it is said to be ultimate truth, it is not as it is said to be. [*mDo sde* ma 247a][10]

Thus it explains that when the phrase "ultimate truth" is used, ultimate truth does not appear to the mind in the way that subject and object appear

10. Both here and in the quotation of this passage in *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya*, there is a substantial omission between these two sentences. It reads *Lha'i bu de la rtog pa dang rnam par rtog pa thams cad 'jugs pa'ang med/ rtog pa'ang med/ ldog pa'ang med do/ don dam par na de la pha rol kyang med/ tshu rol kyang med' dbu skyang med/ lhai' bu/ di ni don dam pa'i bden pa zhes sgro btags te rjod mod kyi*. (Son of a god, one cannot engage with it through thought or conception, nor can one disengage from it through thought or conception; ultimately it has no here, there, or in between. Son of a god! Although the phrase "ultimate truth" is used, it is a fabrication.

distinctly to the mind. Therefore this supports the claim that the Buddha has eliminated all dualistic appearance, but it does not support the claim that he does not realize the ultimate. The *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* says,

> Since he directly perceives only their nature without encountering the produced things, and since he has completely realized it, he is said to be the Buddha. [*dBu ma* 'a 183a]

Thus, this says that Buddha, through the wisdom by means of which he knows things as they are, realizes only reality without encountering dependent phenomena.

Prasannapadā [114a] says that the termination of the engagement of the mind and mental episodes is the termination of conceptualization, and this has already been explained. Moreover, *Madhyamakāvatāra-bhāṣya* argues that if that nature did not exist, it would be pointless for bodhisattvas to make such effort to realize it, and supports this with a quotations from sūtra:

> What is their nature? The nature is that which is neither created nor dependent on any other; and that which is to be realized by a cognitive faculty free from the mists of ignorance. Who would say either that it exists or does not exist? If it does not exist, then for what purpose do the bodhisattvas meditate on the paths of the perfections? Therefore, in order to realize that reality, the bodhisattvas **[416]** make such enormous efforts. As it is said:
>
> Oh, son of noble lineage! The ultimate is unarisen, unceased, indestructible, not coming, not going, inexpressible in words, indescribable in words, incomprehensible through mental fabrications. Oh, son of noble lineage! The ultimate is inexpressible, peaceful, realized through the āryas' discriminative wisdom. Oh, son of noble lineage! Whether or not the Tathāgatas have arisen, the ultimate is that for the purpose of which the bodhisattvas shave their heads and beards, don saffron robes, and, with complete dedication, renounce their homes. After having renounced, in order to realize that reality, they strive as though their hairs and their clothes are on fire. They persevere ceaselessly to realize that reality. Oh, son of noble lineage! If the ultimate did not exist, all of that pure conduct would be pointless, and the arising of the Tathāgatas would be pointless. Since that ultimate exists, the bodhisattvas are said to be knowledgable with respect to the ultimate. [*Mahāmegha-sūtra, mDo sde* wa 99a][11]
> [314a]

11. The sDe dge edition varies slightly from that Tsong khapa quotes, but with no significant difference in meaning.

If one cannot accept the realization of the way things really are, it would be pointless to make efforts to determine whether or not analyses are correct with respect to the way things really are, because it would be impossible to be knowledgeable with respect to the ultimate. And the transcendent lord has said:

> The great sage has taught
> that about eighty-four thousand aggregates.
> For someone who does not understand reality
> these are all fruitless. [*Caturdevīparipṛcchā, rGyud* ca, 279a][12]

Madhyamakāvatāra says,

> The peace obtained through burning the dry firewood of
> Objects of knowledge is the victors' dharmakaya. **[417]**
> There there is neither arising nor ceasing,
> And the cessation of mind is realized by Sambhogakāya. [XI: 8]

The autocommentary says,

> The mind and mental episodes do not engage at all with the object of wisdom—the way things really are. Therefore, it is said that it is realized only through the body of a Buddha. [*dBu ma* 'a 332a]

Nor does our position contradict this statement, because this means that at the time of buddhahood, no engagement of mind and mental episodes—that is, conceptualization—occurs. Therefore, in virtue of that, it is not posited that the dharmakaya is fully achieved, but instead it means that the cessation of conceptualization is achieved through the sambhogakāya.

An ārya, who through wisdom, directly perceives the way things really are, without the slightest appearance of subject–object duality in his perspective, just like water poured into water, is absorbed in meditative equipoise. Thus, he does not directly perceive empirical phenomena, because he would have to perceive them, and they cannot be perceived indirectly. Instead, they would have to be perceived directly. To perceive something without a perceptual aspect is not possible in this system. Therefore, it is not possible for the cognizing mind to which the perceptual aspect of such things as material form or sound appear directly to be without the appearance of subject–object duality. That it does not perceive empirical phenomena does not entail the absurd consequence that the characteristic and characterized are detached. This is because from the perspective of the rational mind that perceives reality, the relation between characteristic and characterized is not posited and because from the perspective of a conventional authoritative cognition of blueness, since in that

12. The translation in sDedge is slightly different from that given by Tsong khapa. The term "The Great sege" is not present.

perspective there is no ultimate truth, these two would also not need to be detached. These two reasons are similar.

Moreover, if the Buddha perceived empirical phenomena through the wisdom by means of which he knows things as they are, since it would follow that the rational mind that perceives reality would perceive conventional truth, the characteristics of the two truths would be confused. **[418]** The conventional truth would have to be posited by a rational mind that cognizes reality.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.2.2.2.2 Rebutting the objection that that says that it is not tenable that empirical phenomena can be perceived

Here someone might argue as follows: Is it or is it not maintained in this system that at the level of buddhahood, there is a wisdom by means of which empirical phenomena can be known? On the second alternative, the account in *Madhyamakāvatāra* of the knowledge of the ten powers would not be tenable. It would hence not be possible to accept the Buddha's omniscience, and this would be a deprecation of the teacher. On the first alternative, if it were not the case that although things do not exist through their own characteristics, they appear to the fools to do so, then nobody would be in error; but of course they do appear that way. Then they would have to appear through the wisdom by means of which the buddhas know empirical phenomena. In that case, since they do not exist as they appear, the Buddha would be in error.

Since as this is presented, it would be erroneous, the second alternative cannot be maintained. Here, the *Madhymakāvatāra-bhāṣya* [*dBu ma* 'a 342a], quoting sūtra, says,

> Even in an area the size of a chariot, sentient beings who are not evident appear to the Tathāgata. There are many such cases. But this is not the case with respect to the gods or humans in this billionfold universe. [*Tathāgatamahākaruṇānirdeśa-sūtra, mDo sde* pa 199a]

As it has been said, the sentient beings in an area the size of a chariot, apparent neither to non-buddhist sages with the five clairvoyances nor to śrāvakas nor to pratyekabuddhas but apparent to the Buddha, are numerous. Since they appear to him, the Buddha knows them, but not without appearance.

There are two kinds of apparent objects: empirical phenomena that are not affected by the latent potential for ignorance, such as the major and minor marks of the Buddha, and empirical phenomena that are affected by the latent potential for ignorance, such as impure vessels and their contents. There is no point in eliminating the first at the level of buddhahood. The second will have already been eliminated in virtue of having eliminated their causes.

[419] Their mode of appearance is as follows: When the marks of the Buddha appear to a person who has not eliminated ignorance, even though they do not exist through their own characteristics, they appear to him to do so. This is not because the object has arisen through the power of the latent potentials for ignorance, but because the subject is affected by the power of the latent potentials for ignorance. This is because it does not appear to that subject as it appears from the perspective of another person. But that is just how it appears from his own perspective.

When the objects that are conditioned by the latent potential for ignorance appear to the Buddha through the wisdom by means of which he knows empirical phenomena, they appear to the Buddha in virtue of appearing to a person who is affected by the latent potentials for ignorance, but they do not appear in the Buddha's own perspective independent of their appearance to that other person. Therefore, the fact that the Buddha knows the appearance of such things as form and sound that do not exist through their own characteristic, but appear to do so, in virtue of their appearance to those who are ignorant. However, the Buddha does not know them in virtue of their appearing to him in that way from his own perspective, independent of their appearance to that other person. Thus, this does not mean that he is in error in virtue of their appearance.

Thus from the perspective of the wisdom by means of which he knows empirical phenomena, all phenomena appear to him as selfless, essenceless, unreal, and illusionlike, but not as truly existent. When things appear through that wisdom in virtue of their appearance to the ignorant, it is merely the appearance of their appearance as truly existent to others. As *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā* says,

> Those who are knowledgeable about things
> See things as impermanent and deceptive,
> Strawlike, empty and selfless.
> They are seen as void.
>
> Beings, that are baseless, that are not objects,
> Rootless, that do not endure,
> That arise entirely from ignorance,
> That have no beginning, middle, or end—**[420]**
>
> —And that are without any core, like a plantain tree,
> And that are like a city of gandharvas,
> Or an endless city of ignorance
> Appear to them just as illusions. [26–28]

The introductory passage to the last two verses means that not only the āryas, who have accomplished all that is to be done, have seen them in that way; but that the master himself, as well, through his own understanding has

achieved a similar realization. The first verse presents the mode of perception of the āryas who have accomplished all that is to be done.

The kinds of wisdom through which a buddha knows the way things really are and through which he knows empirical phenomena are not substantially different. Therefore this does not contradict the statement that the Buddha, through single kind of wisdom, knows all objects of knowledge. This is because just as although the dharmakāya and the rūpakāya are substantially one, they are not interchangeable, so are these two kinds of wisdom.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.2.3 Classifications of ultimate truth

The *Madhyamakāvatāra* says that the ultimate truth can be elaborately divided into sixteen kinds of emptiness. There is also an intermediate division into four: emptiness of entity, emptiness of nonentity, emptiness of self, and emptiness of other. The brief division is into two: the emptiness of the person and the emptiness of phenomena [313a]. According to other treatises, the ultimate is twofold: the primary ultimate truth and the secondary ultimate truth. For instance, the *Satyadvaya-vibhāga* says,

> Since the refutation of such things as arising
> Is consistent with reality,
> We assert that it is ultimate. [*dBu ma* sa 2a][13]

And the *Madhyamakāloka* says;

> Since non-arising is consistent with the ultimate, it is called "ultimate." But it is not actual. The actual is that ultimate which is free from all fabrication. [*dBu ma* sa 149a]

Here "fabrication" refers not only to the fabrication that is the object of negation through reasoning but also to the fabrication of appearance. **[421]** The freedom from fabrication of appearance is the vanishing of all fabrication of dualistic appearances in the perspective of one directly perceiving reality; but it is not just the absence of the fabrication of appearance. Otherwise, since reality and the fabrication of the appearance of things are nondetachable, it would follow that the ultimate truth would be impossible. Consequently, the mere absence of the fabrication—which is the object of negation of the inference that establishes the selflessness of such things as the person and phenomena—the aggregates—is an object found by the wisdom through which the Buddha sees things as they are. From that perspective, the fabrication of

13. The third line is not present in the sDe dge edition of the text.

the appearance of the duality of the person and the aggregates is also stilled. Therefore it is ultimate truth.

However, in the case of the emptiness that is the negation—that is, the internal negation—of the ultimate arising of the person and the aggregates, the bases of emptiness must appear to conventional authoritative cognition, such as a visual consciousness that sees things directly. Therefore, it appears through a dualistic appearance from the perspective of the cognizing mind that sees it directly, but does not appear without dualistic appearance. Therefore, it is a secondary ultimate, but is a genuine conventional truth. The autocommentary to the *Satyadvaya-vibhāga* says,

> Some argue as follows. Since such things as real arising do not appear when things appear, they are called unreal conventionalities. Similarly, since the negation of such things as real arising also does not appear to the cognizing mind to which the things that are the bases of the negation appear, the negations should also be regarded as unreal conventionalities. In response to this, it is said that since those negations are not distinct from the entities, it is not the case that they do not appear. [*dBu ma* sa 5b][14]

The external negation of conceptual fabrication, which is the mere negation of the inferential object of negation, does not appear directly to faculties such as the visual faculty. This is not because the negation is conventionally unreal. Instead, it is because this system maintains that the internal negation appears to that to which the basis of negation appears.

Through this argument, one should understand that the objects perceived through the wisdom through which the Buddha perceives empirical phenomena and the object posited through the wisdom of the other āryas in the postmeditative state, which are perceived through internal negation as illusionlike, are also secondary ultimates. **[422]**

Some are very happy to hear that the āryas, through the wisdom of meditative equipoise, realize freedom from fabrication, but are very unhappy when they hear that the ārya realizes the external negation free from fabrication. The reason is that without understanding the meaning of external negation, which is the mere elimination of the object of negation, they erroneously believe that all external negations imply complete nonexistence, as in the case of the horns of a rabbit. But if nothing existed, it would be contradictory to say that there are external negations.

14. The translation Tsong khapa quotes varies slightly in wording from that found in the sDe dge, with no difference in meaning.

1.2.1.1.1.2.1.2.3 Presentation of the enumeration of the two truths

That there is a distinction between being merely conventional and being true does not mean that there are conventional phenomena that are not included in the conventional truth. And the statement that such things as reflections are conventionally unreal and not conventionally true does not mean that there are conventional existents that are not conventional truths, as has been previously explained. *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* [7b] and *Madhymakāvatāra-bhāṣya* [243a] say that all three truths of suffering, origins of suffering and path are conventional truths. And *Prasannapadā* says,

> All conventional things—such things as expressions and that to which expressions refer and all knowledge and objects of knowledge—should be known as mundane conventional truth. [163b]

Since it says that all conventional objects are conventional truths, all objects of knowledge are comprised by the two truths. When anything is precluded from being a deceptive or unreal object its being a nondeceptive object must be affirmed. Therefore, being deceptive or nondeceptive are mutually exclusive and exhaustive. The fact that being deceptive and nondeceptive are mutually exclusive and exhaustive applies to all objects of knowledge, thus categorizing them. Therefore, there is no third alternative. Thus, one should understand that the two truths precisely enumerate all objects of knowledge. **[423]** *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> Therefore, by seeing that anything is either real or unreal,
> Things are known and two natures are perceived. [VI: 23cd]

This way of characterizing the two truths establishes that they are a precise enumeration.

1.2.1.1.1.2.2 Why, if you do not understand the two truths you do not understand the essence of the scriptures.

> 9. Those who do not understand
> The distinction between these two truths
> Do not understand
> The Buddha's profound teaching.

The buddhas' way of teaching the Dharma relies on the two truths. Those who do not understand the distinction between the conventional truth and the

ultimate truth, as it has been explained above, do not understand the Buddha's teaching of the profound dependent origination—the way things really are. Therefore, if one desires to understand the essence of the teaching, one must understand that to the extent that dependently arisen and dependently designated conventional phenomena appear like the moon in the water, action and agent are tenable. Just on this ground, one should understand the ultimate, which is the elimination of the two extremes of inherent existence and of complete nihilism.

1.2.1.1.1.2.3 The necessity of presenting the two truths

Suppose someone argued as follows: Since the nature of the ultimate is to be free from elaboration, one could just teach that. Why teach the conventional, such as the aggregates, elements, faculties, truths, and dependent origination? Those which are not the ultimate are to be abandoned, and there is no point in teaching something that is to be abandoned.

> 10. Without depending on the conventional truth,
> The meaning of the ultimate cannot be taught.
> Without understanding the meaning of the ultimate,
> Nirvana is not achieved.

It is true that the erroneous conventions—the appearance of things that do not exist in reality as though they do—are to be abandoned. But without relying on the mundane ultimate, including such things as expressions and that to which they refer and knowledge and objects of knowledge, which are, according to the āryas, nominal conventional truth, the ultimate truth cannot be taught; and without its being taught, it cannot be realized. Without understanding the meaning of the ultimate, nirvana cannot be achieved. Therefore, since it is a means for achieving liberation, just as a person who desires water looks for a vessel, one who aspires for liberation must undoubtedly **[424]** at the beginning accept the conventional just as it is.

1.2.1.1.1.2.4 The error of misapprehending the two truths

> 11. By a misperception of emptiness
> A person of little intelligence is destroyed:
> Like a snake incorrectly seized,
> Or like a spell incorrectly cast.

A practitioner, having realized that ignorance gives rise to conventional truth, and that it is essenceless, realizes that emptiness has the characteristic of being ultimate truth and does not fall into the two extremes. This is because

the reason for grasping a nature as existing through its own characteristics, which existed previously but not thereafter, is not cognized now or at any previous time, and because this does not undermine mundane conventions, which are like reflections. Therefore, agent, action, and effects are not undermined.

That practitioner does not fabricate things as ultimately existent entities because he sees such things as actions and effects only in the context of essencelessness; because he understands that nothing exists essentially; and because according to those who assert that things exist essentially, nothing such as actions and effects is possible.

Those who do not see the distinction between the two truths in this way, but who see compounded phenomena as essentially empty, imagine things that are seen to be essentially empty to be nonexistent. Alternatively, they imagine that some emptiness is truly existent, and as a basis for that, fabricate essentially existent things. Both of these are misperceptions of emptiness. Those who see it this way have little intelligence and will be harmed by it. The way that they are harmed is as follows: When they see essencelessness, they think that since there is no basis for positing action and agent, nothing exists, and so fall into the error of deprecation, a wrong view. As *Ratnāvalī* says.

> If this phenomenon is misperceived,
> The unwise are thereby ruined.
> Thus, through this nihilistic view, **[425]**
> They will sink into corruption. [II: 19]

So, they say, if you are not deprecating everything, then how could you say that these phenomena are empty of essential existence, given that they are perceived? Thus they abandon emptiness, saying that the meaning of "essencelessness" is not that of "emptiness." Having abandoned that, due to the karma of deprivation of dharma they transmigrate into lower realms. As *Ratnāvalī* continues,

> Moreover, if this is misperceived,
> Any unworthy fools who take pride in their wisdom,
> In virtue of abandoning it,
> Will fall headfirst into Avīci hell. [II: 20]

One might ask, "If the beneficial is taken otherwise, why will it not just be nonbeneficial, but also harmful? After all, if the seeds are sown at the wrong time, the farmer will not ruin himself." Instead of this, consider these other examples: When a snake is seized through the power of a mantra and medicine is taken as per instructions, this can attract great wealth; but if the instructions are ignored, and the snake is seized incorrectly, he who seizes it *can* be ruined. And if a spell is cast as per instructions, it can be beneficial; but if one ignores the instructions and casts it incorrectly, it *can* harm him who casts it himself.

1.2.1.1.1.2.5 The reason the teacher did not teach the two truths at first in view of the difficulty of understanding them

12. Knowing that the Dharma is
Deep and difficult for simpletons to understand,
The Buddha's mind despaired of
Being able to teach it.

Thus when emptiness is misperceived, he who misperceives it is harmed; and since those of little intelligence are not able to grasp properly the meaning of "the way things really are," the teacher, after attaining buddhahood, saw both the dispositions of sentient beings and the profundity of the Dharma. Knowing that those of little intelligence would have difficulty understanding the profound Dharma of dependent origination, the mind of the transcendent sage despaired of being able to teach it. **[426]** In sūtra it says,

> Not long after having attained buddhahood, the Transcendent Lord thought, "I have realized the profound and subtle Dharma which is not an object of sophistry, nor a matter for the sophists, but to be realized by the wise. If I teach this to others, others will not understand my thought, and they will harm me and be disheartened." Being unhappy, he decided, "I will remain solitary and I will enjoy the blissful Dharma I have attained in this isolated place." [*Lalitavistara-sūtra, mDo sde* kha 187b][15]

And this is elaborated further.

1.2.1.1.2 The principal demonstration that we do not commit those errors

13. Since the absurd consequences you adduce
Are not relevant to emptiness,
Your rejection of emptiness
Is not relevant to me.

Without a nonerroneous understanding of the two truths, many erroneous consequences are said to follow, such as, "If all this were empty there would be no arising or cessation" [XXIV: 1ab]. This argument is advanced without understanding the system of the two truths, and without comprehension of

15. The translation here follows Prasannapadā at [211b]. The sDe dge edition of the sūtra differs.

emptiness, the meaning of emptiness, and the purpose of emptiness. Therefore, this is not relevant to us, who accept emptiness. Since you have said that the doctrine of emptiness is beset by many errors, you reject emptiness; but it is not tenable that these errors attach to our system.

You have charged us with errors by imagining that emptiness means the nonexistence of things that can perform functions. However, we do not accept that but instead construe the meaning of emptiness to be dependent origination. Therefore, these refutations are not relevant to our system. The argument that in the Madhyamaka system action and agent are not tenable is grounded in not understanding that the meaning of emptiness is dependent origination. Therefore, one should make an effort to understand this.

1.2.1.1.3 How our system is not only nonerroneous but also beneficial

> 14. For him to whom emptiness makes sense,
> Everything makes sense.
> For him to whom emptiness does not make sense,
> Nothing makes sense.

[427] Not only are none of those charges applicable to our position, but the entire framework of such things as truth is absolutely tenable, because in the system according to which emptiness of essence—that is, of existence through its own characteristic—makes sense, everything that we have been discussing makes sense. This is why it makes sense: we maintain emptiness to be the emptiness of essential existence of that which is dependently arisen. Therefore, for anyone to whom emptiness makes sense, dependent arising makes sense.

Only the dependently arisen suffers; suffering does not make sense for that which is not dependently arisen. Since there is suffering, an origin of suffering, a cessation of suffering, and a path that leads to cessation also make sense. Since these exist, knowledge of these makes sense, and since these four exist the fruits and those who enjoy them make sense. Since those who have enjoyed the fruits and those who have practiced the paths exist, the sangha makes sense. Since the truths exist, the noble Dharma makes sense. Since these two exist, the Buddha makes sense. Thus the three jewels make sense.

All mundane and transcendental phenomena, the sacred and the profane, their effects and mundane conventions make sense. The *Commentary* explains that the reason that all of these make sense is that they exist and that is also in accord with the mādhyamika's system [166b]. Therefore, this does not mean that since they are said to exist, we fall into the extreme of reification or that all systems need to be consigned to the perspective of others.

1.2.1.2 How we show that he himself commits those errors

This section has three parts: demonstrating that despite the fact that he criticizes the errors, he commits them; the way he himself commits the errors with which he charges others; and clarifying these errors.

1.2.1.2.1 The fact that despite the fact that he criticizes the errors, he commits them

In any system in which emptiness of essence does not make any sense, dependent arising will not make sense. **[428]** In that case, no ontology would make any sense. Why this is the case will be explained later.

1.2.1.2.2 The way he himself commits the errors with which he charges others

> 15. When you foist on us
> All of your errors,
> You are like a man who has mounted his horse
> And has forgotten that very horse.

Our own position is perfectly correct and is perfectly consistent with the entire framework of samsara and nirvana. It is inconsistent with your position, which commits many serious obvious and gross errors regarding what is right in front of your face. Because you are so foolish, you do not see where the virtues and errors lie and you foist your own errors on us. This is just like somebody who has mounted a horse and has forgotten that very horse. He charges somebody else with taking that horse and accuses him of a crime. Having mounted a horse characterized by dependent origination and empty of essential existence, and, due to inattention, having not seen that, you charge us with errors.

1.2.1.2.3 Clarifying these errors

What are those errors that others commit but do not perceive, and that they therefore charge are committed by those who subscribe to emptiness?

> 16. If you regard all things
> As existing in virtue of their essence,

Then you will regard all things
As being without causes and conditions.

Here they are: If you regard things as existing in virtue of their essence, or essentially, since essence is not given rise to by causes and conditions you will regard all things as not depending on causes and conditions.

17. Effects and causes;
And agent, instrument and action;
And arising and ceasing;
And the effects will be undermined.

If you think that a pot, for instance, exists essentially, then there would be no need of causes and conditions such as clay. But it is not tenable for the pot, which is an effect, to exist without causes. If the pot does not exist, then the agent—the potter—the instrument—such as the wheel—and the action of creating the pot would not exist either. Without these, there would be no arising or ceasing. Thus the effect would also be undermined. In short, only those who assert that things exist essentially are committed to the untenability of the whole framework of cause and effect and of arising and ceasing, etc. **[429]** You are therefore foisting your own errors on us.

1.2.2 Presentation of our own explanation of emptiness as the meaning of dependent origination

18. That which is dependent origination
Is explained to be emptiness.
That, being a dependent designation,
Is itself the middle way.

The reason that according to our system, this whole ontology is tenable is that we maintain that "emptiness of being essentially arisen" is explained to refer to that which is arisen in dependence on causes and conditions. Where has it been explained like that? In the following places: The *Anavatapta-sūtra* says,

> Whatever is arisen from conditions is unarisen.
> It does not have the essence of arising. [*mDo sde* pha 230b]

And the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* says:

> Oh men of great intelligence! Having in mind that which is essentially non-arisen, I have explained that all phenomena are non-arisen.[16]

16. Though Tsong khapa attributes this quotation to the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra,* it does not appear to occur there. However, it is found in the *Sarvapuṇya-samuccaya-samādhi-sūtra [mDo sde* na 104a].

And the *Dvyardhaśatikā-sūtra* says,

All phenomena are empty—that is, in virtue of being essenceless. [*Sher phyin na rtsogs* ka 136a]

Of these citations from sūtra, the first one refutes their being essentially arisen by arguing that because they have arisen from conditions, they are dependently originated and says that the very meaning of "depending on conditions" is the meaning of "empty of essential existence." This statement refutes the assertion that being a dependently originated phenomenon that arises and ceases in dependence on causes and conditions entails existing essentially. It also refutes those views according to which no action or agent is possible in the context of essencelessness. This is because this has eloquently distinguished between being non-arisen and lacking essential arising.

In the second citation from sūtra, the teacher interprets his own intention, saying that the statements that he has made that things are not arisen are made with the fact in mind that they are not *essentially* arisen. Therefore, this means that one should take the meaning of the refutations in sūtra of things being arisen not to be that they are not arisen *at all* but instead to be that they are not *essentially* arisen.

The third citation from sūtra demonstrates the difference between nonexistence and essencelessness by saying that the meaning of "emptiness" is *emptiness of essence*, that is, *essencelessness*. **[430]**

Suppose someone argued as follows: What is the meaning of the many statements that the meaning of *emptiness of essential existence* is the meaning of *dependent orgination*? If its meaning is like that of "*that which is bulbous* is posited as the meaning of 'pot,'" then when one ascertains through a particular cognitive process that effects have arisen from causes, one should thereby ascertain through that same cognitive process the meaning of emptiness, but this does not make sense. You cannot escape from this problem, even if you say that the meaning of the expression that refers to depending arising is itself the meaning of *emptiness*. It is also not tenable, as was explained earlier, to maintain that emptiness is the indirect object of a direct ascertainment of dependent arising. So, what does this mean?

But we do not maintain any of that. Then what do we maintain? To take the meaning of "emptiness" as *dependent origination* is only for those mādhyamikas who have, through authoritative cognition, refuted things having essential existence, but not for others. When these mādhyamikas ascertain that internal and external things are dependently arisen, in virtue of their dependence on causes, as a consequence of that very cognitive process, they ascertain the emptiness of essential existence. Essential existence is realized to be independence of others, and that and dependent origination are realized by authoritative cognition to be inconsistent.

Therefore, the person who has cultivated the ascertainment of emptiness, which is the negation of essential existence through dependent origination, having seen, heard, and remembered that such things as barley and sprouts are dependent on causes or conditions, should then practice the contemplation of the fact that they are essenceless for that very reason. By doing so, even if one is not taught about emptiness—that is, essencelessness—directly, just through the teaching of the doctrine of dependent origination the latent potential for understanding emptiness will be activated in future lives. For example, when Aśvajit explained dependent origination in the context of the Four Noble Truths to the mendicant Upatiṣya, the latter realized reality.[17]

[431] That emptiness that is essencelessness is posited as a dependent designation. Just like the chariot, which is designated in dependence on its parts, such as the wheels, anything designated in dependence on its parts is empty—that is, not essentially arisen. Emptiness—that is, the absence of essential arising—is free from the two extremes. Therefore it is the middle and is the middle path—that is, where the mādhyamikas fare. Similarly, it says in *Vigrahavyāvartanī* that these three are synonyms:

> I prostrate to the Buddha who is unparalleled, and
> Who has given the supreme teaching that
> Emptiness, dependent origination and
> The middle path have the same meaning. [71]

> 19. There does not exist anything
> That is not dependently arisen.
> Therefore there does not exist anything
> That is not empty.

Therefore, since there is nothing that is not dependently arisen, and since dependently originated phenomena are all empty of essential existence, there are no phenomena that are not empty of essential existence. According to the *Anavatapta-sūtra:*

> The wise, having understood dependently originated phenomena,
> Do not rely on extreme views.
> They understand that phenomena have causes and conditions,
> And that no phenomena exist without causes and conditions. [*mDo sde* pha 230b][18]

17. This story can be found in at least two places: *Vinaya-Vastu, 'dul ba* ka 32b, *Abhiniṣkramaṇasūtra* [*mDo sde* sa 88a].

18. The sDe dge edition varies slightly from that Tsong khapa quotes, but with no difference in meaning.

1.2.3 Why for those who do not accept this, no ontological framework is tenable

This section has six parts: the Four Noble Truths as objects of knowledge will make no sense; knowledge of such things as the Four Noble Truths and the four fruits will make no sense, the three jewels will make no sense, agent, action, and effects will make no sense, mundane conventions will make no sense, and transcendental conventions will make no sense.

1.2.3.1 The Four Noble Truths as objects of knowledge will make no sense

20. If all this were nonempty, as in your view,
Then there would be no arising and ceasing.
It would follow that the Four Noble Truths
Would not exist.

If all internal and external phenomena were not seen to be empty of essential existence, there would be neither becoming—arising—nor ceasing. In that case, there would be, as according to your view, no Four Noble Truths. Why is that?

21. If it is not dependently arisen,
How could suffering come to be?
Suffering has been taught to be impermanent,
And so cannot exist through its essence.

[432] That which is essentially existent is not dependently arisen. If something is not dependently arisen, it is not impermanent, just like a sky flower. So how could there be the truth of suffering? After all, as the Transcendent Lord has said, "only impermanent things are suffering." If one maintained that since it is said that it is contaminated impermanent phenomena that are suffering these phenomena exist essentially—that is, in virtue of their essence—then since those things do not have this nature, it would make no sense for them to be suffering.

22. If something exists through its essence,
How could it ever be arisen?
It follows that for one who denies emptiness
There could be no sources of suffering.

If suffering existed essentially, it would not arise. Then how could it arise from the sources of suffering? It could not! Thus for those who criticize the

view that suffering is empty of essence, the sources of suffering could not exist. For they are called "the sources of suffering" because suffering arises from them.

> 23. If suffering existed essentially,
> Its cessation would not exist.
> So if one takes it to exist essentially,
> One denies cessation.

If suffering existed essentially, there could not be the noble truth of the cessation of suffering because with such an essence, it would not be changeable at all. Therefore, since if anything existed essentially, it would be eternal, those who attack the proponents of emptiness by maintaining the position that things exist essentially attack the noble truth of the cessation of suffering.

> 24. If the path had an essence,
> Practice would not be tenable.
> If this path is to be practiced,
> It cannot have an essence you attribute.

If the truth of the path existed essentially, since it would exist without being practiced, it would not be tenable that it is practiced. So what would the point be of practicing it? If one maintains that the truth of the path is something one must practice, your noble path could not exist essentially, because it would require action.

> 25. If suffering, its origin, and
> Its cessation are nonexistent,
> By what path could one seek
> To obtain the cessation of suffering?

The path is practiced in order to attain the cessation of suffering and to abandon the sources of suffering. But, according to those who maintain that things exist essentially, **[433]** there could be no source of the suffering aggregates or truth of the cessation of suffering. So, without the truth of the cessation of suffering that one aspires to obtain, and which is achieved by practicing the path by means of which one abandons it sources, it is not tenable that the path is practiced.

1.2.3.2 Knowledge of such things as the Four Noble Truths and the four fruits will make no sense

> 26. If it is not understood
> Through its essence,

How could it come to be understood?
Does essence not endure?

If suffering exists earlier as essentially not completely understood, how will it come to be completely understood later? Does that which exists essentially—like the heat of fire—not endure in exactly the same form? It does, because existing essentially and changing into something else are inconsistent.

27. Just like complete understanding,
The activities of relinquishing, realizing,
Meditating, and the four fruits
Would not make sense.

Just as complete understanding would be impossible, according to your view, the abandonment of the sources of suffering, the realization of cessation, and the practice of the path would all be impossible. This is because if the sources of suffering already existed essentially as unabandoned, they could not be abandoned later, because essence cannot change. These refutations presented in the context of "complete understanding" should be applied, as they have just been explained, to the other two claims.

28. For an essentialist,
How could it be possible
To attain those fruits
That are already essentially unattained?

Just like complete understanding, if the four fruits—-such as the fruit of the stream-enterer—did not exist previously, it would not be possible for them to exist later. How could four fruits that existed earlier as essentially unattained be attained later? They could not be, because being completely essentialized, their nature could not change.

1.2.3.3 The three jewels will make no sense

29. Without the fruits, there would be no
Enjoyers of the fruits or practitioners.
If the eight kinds of beings and persons did not exist,
There would be no sangha.

30. If the Noble Truths did not exist
The noble Dharma would not exist.
If there were neither Dharma nor sangha,
How could a Buddha come to exist?

If the four fruits and their enjoyment did not exist, then those—those who have enjoyed them and the four enterers—would not exist. Without those four sets of beings and the eight individual kinds of person there would be no jewel of the sangha. Without the Noble Truths there would also be no jewel of the Dharma. **[434]** Without the jewels of the Dharma and the sangha how could there be a Buddha? There could not be! These should all be understood as they were explained earlier.

> 31. For you, it would follow absurdly that a Buddha
> Would be independent of enlightenment.
> And for you, it would follow absurdly that
> Enlightenment would be independent of a Buddha.

If there were any essentially existing Buddha, as you would have it, it would not depend—that is, rely on—enlightenment—that is, on omniscience—. This is because

> Essence itself is not constructed
> And does not depend on another. [XV: 2cd]

Similarly, on your view, it would follow absurdly that enlightenment—that is, omniscience—would be baseless, since it would not depend—that is, rely on—a Buddha. This is because it would exist essentially.

> 32. For you, one who is
> Essentially unenlightened,
> Even by practicing the path to enlightenment,
> Could not achieve enlightenment.

Moreover, on your view, a person who existed essentially as a non-Buddha prior to enlightenment, even if he engaged in the practices of the bodhisattva in order to attain the unparalleled enlightenment, could not attain enlightenment, because whatever his essence is now can never be changed.

1.2.3.4 Agent, action, and effects will make no sense

> 33. Nobody could ever perform
> Virtuous or nonvirtuous actions.
> If all this were nonempty, what could one do?
> What can one with an essence do?

Moreover, if you maintain that things exist essentially, then no person would perform virtuous—that is, morally correct—or nonvirtuous—immoral—actions. This is because if things were not empty of essential existence, what action could there be? Action is not tenable in the context of essential existence.

> 34. For you, even without virtuous or nonvirtuous causes,
> There would be an effect.
> According to you there is no effect
> Arisen from virtuous or nonvirtuous causes.

Moreover, if you were to say that their effects exist essentially, then even without one having performed virtuous or nonvirtuous actions you would experience the pleasant and unpleasant effects that are caused by these two. In that case, it would be pointless to perform these two kinds of actions in order to obtain the effects. Therefore, you, without having performed the two kinds of actions, would not experience the two effects that arise from the two causes—the virtuous and nonvirtuous actions.

> 35. If for you, an effect arose
> From virtuous or nonvirtuous causes,
> Then, having arisen from virtuous or nonvirtuous causes,
> How could that effect be nonempty?

If you experienced the two effects that arise from virtuous and nonvirtuous causes, **[435]** then why would these two effects not be empty of essential existence? They would be empty, because, arising from the virtuous and nonvirtuous, they are dependently originated, like a reflection.

1.2.3.5 Mundane conventions will make no sense

> 36. Those who deny emptiness,
> Which is dependent origination,
> Undermine all of
> The mundane conventions.

If you were to say that things exist essentially, this would be to deny emptiness, which is dependent origination. One who did this would undermine all mundane conventions such as saying "Go!" or "Do this!" or "Stand up!" or "Sit!"

> 37. To deny emptiness is to assert that
> No action is possible;
> That there can be action without effort;
> And that there can be an agent who performs no action.

Moreover, if one rejects the emptiness of essential existence of things, then, since things that exist essentially exist even without being created, nobody could perform any action. There would be action without any effort—that is, without any performance—and there would be agents even though they had

not performed any actions. But none of this makes any sense. Therefore, it is not the case that things are not empty of essential existence.

38. If there were essence, all beings
Would be birthless, deathless,
And eternally enduring.
They would be void of a variety of states.

Moreover, if beings existed essentially, then transmigraters would be birthless and deathless because, since they would be by nature ungenerated, they could not change. If they were birthless and deathless, beings would endure eternally, and since they would not depend on causes and conditions, they would not exist in a variety of states. As the Lord has said,

If there were even the slightest thing nonempty,
the Victor would not make predictions.
And without any change, everybody would exist eternally just as they are
And there would be neither improvement nor degradation.
[*Pitāputrasamāgama-sūtra*, *dKon rtsegs* na, 50b][19]

And the *Hastikakṣya-sūtra* says,

If phenomena had any essence,
The Victor and his disciples would have known about it.
No eternal phenomena could achieve nirvana.
The wise would never cease their fabrication.[20]
[Tathāgatajñānamudrāsaṃādhi-sūtra, *mDo sde* da 251b]

[436] It is clear that these sūtras present "emptiness" as meaning *dependent origination*.

1.2.3.6 Transcendental conventions will make no sense

39. If they were nonempty,
Then there would be neither achievement of that which has not been achieved;
Nor the act of ending suffering;
Nor the abandonment of all of the afflictions.

19. This passage is quoted in *Prasannapadā* [171a]. The Sanskrit edition [225] edited by Bauddha Bhāratī attributes the quotation to the *Pitāputrasamāgama-sūtra*, but it does not appear in extant Tibetan translations of the sūtra.

20. This quotation is misattributed both by Tsong khapa and by Candrakīrti [126a].

If things were not empty of essential existence, then there would neither be the achievement later of that which was not previously achieved, nor the final exhaustion of suffering that had not been exhausted earlier, nor the abandonment of all of the defilements and actions that had not been abandoned earlier. Thus none of the transcendental conventions would make sense.

1.2.4 Showing that to see the reality of dependent arising is to see the reality of the Four Noble Truths

40. Whoever sees dependent arising
Also sees suffering,
And its origin,
And its cessation, as well as the path.

Therefore, if one maintains that things exist essentially, this entire system would be untenable. Therefore, the practitioner who has seen emptiness to have the characteristic of dependent origination sees the reality of the Four Noble Truths: suffering, its origin, its cessation, and the path. The *Ārya-dhyāyitamuṣṭi-sūtra* says.

> O Transcendental Lord, how should one understand the Four Noble Truths?
>
> The Transcendental Lord replied: O, Mañjuśrī, whoever has seen compounded phenomena to be unarisen has completely understood suffering. Whoever has seen all phenomena to be unarisen has abandoned the sources of suffering. Whoever has seen all phenomena to be completely liberated has realized cessation. Whoever has seen all phenomena to be completely unarisen has practiced the path.
>
> O, Mañjuśrī, whoever has seen the Four Noble Truths this way does not conceptualize that which is nonconceptual, saying, "These phenomena are virtuous; these phenomena are nonvirtuous; these phenomena are to be abandoned; these phenomena are to be realized. **[437]** Suffering should be completely understood, the origins of suffering should be abandoned, cessation should be realized, and the path should be practiced." Thus he does not see imaginary phenomena.
>
> Foolish ordinary beings, when they conceptualize these phenomena, develop desire, aversion, and confusion. But he neither accepts nor rejects any phenomenon, and the one who neither accepts nor rejects does not develop attachment to the three realms. He sees the three realms as unarisen, and as like illusions, like dreams, and

like echoes. In virtue of seeing all phenomena as having that nature, he becomes free from attachment and aversion towards all sentient beings.

Why is that so? Because he does not objectify the phenomena toward which one might develop attachment and aversion. With his skylike mind, he does not see even the Buddha to be real. Nor does he see the Dharma to be real, nor does he see the Sangha to be real. And thus, because he sees all phenomena as empty, he does not develop doubt. Without doubt, there is no appropriation. Being unappropriated, and without appropriating, he attains nirvana. [*Sarvadharmāpravṛttinirdeśa-sūtra, mDo sde* ma 276b][21]

2. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

When the mādhyamika shows that not even the slightest phenomenon related to samsara or nirvana exists essentially, our opponents argue that according to our system the entire framework of mundane and transcendental phenomena makes no sense. In response to this, the present chapter explains things as follows: There is not even the slightest particle that withstands analysis through the arguments that examine and reject true existence. Therefore, while the opponent's system contains errors that make it impossible for him to assert **[438]** "this exists and this does not," not only do we not commit those errors in our own system, but this entire framework makes perfect sense.

The main point is that the meaning of "emptiness" is *dependent origination*, but emptiness does not mean the negation of things such as action and agent. Thus, one who is discerning and aspires to subscribe to the Madhyamaka system should think in that manner.

The reificationists press us hard, saying, "According to your system, the entire framework of the mundane and the transcendental makes no sense." One should not rush into a place in advance before the other one pushes, by saying that according to our system we cannot say that we cannot set out any framework within which one could say "this exists and this does not exist."[22]

This is the commentary on the twenty-fourth chapter, having forty verses, called "the examination of the four noble truths."

21. This citation is a small portion of a more extensive citation found in *Prasannapadā* [171b–173b].

22. This last remark is aimed at mādhyamikas who, in Tsong khapa's view, adopt a nihilistic understanding of Madhyamaka.

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CHAPTER XXV

Examination of Nirvana

Chapter Outline

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1.2.4 Rebutting the charge that this refutation contradicts sūtra
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[438: 12] We have now completed the first of the two parts of the section on the rebuttal of refutations—the examination of the Four Noble Truths. This chapter constitutes the second part—the examination of nirvana. It has three parts: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

This section has two parts: the objection and the reply.

1.1 The objection

1. If all this is empty.
Then there is neither arising nor passing away.
Through the abandonment or cessation of what
Does one aspire to nirvana?

Here it is said that the Transcendent Lord has said that there are two kinds of nirvana: nirvana with residual aggregates and nirvana without residual aggregates. The first is just like killing all of the bandits but leaving their camp intact. In the same way, this is a cessation in which, though one has completely abandoned the afflictions, the residual aggregates projected by past actions and afflictions remain. As it says in sūtra,

> When the undiscouraged mind
> Voluntarily accepts feeling,
> His mind achieves liberation
> Like the extinguishment of a butterlamp.[1] [*Theragāthā, Visatinipāta* section, *Anuruddha theragāthā IX,* verse 906]

The second one is **[439]** just like killing all of the bandits and destroying their camp as well. In the same way this is a cessation in which, once one has

1. This is quoted differently in *Prasannapadā:* Tsong khapa has it as *ma zhum pa yi sems kyis ni/ tshor ba* following the sDe dge (not *char ba* as in the published edition) *dang du len pa na/de yi sems ni rnam par grol/mar mi shi bar gyur ba bzhin//* but Candrakīrti has *ma zhum pa yi lus kyi ni/*[173b], and *kāyena* [228]. (When an undiscouraged body), Tsong khapa and the sDe dge edition of the sūtra [*'Dul ba phran tshegs* da 291b] agree with the Pali *cittena.*

not only completely abandoned the afflictions, but all residual aggregates are eliminated as well. As it says in sūtra,

> When the body disintegrates and perception ceases,
> One is freed from all feeling.
> The compounded phenomena are completely pacified and
> Consciousness disappears. [*Udāna, Khuddakanikāya* section, IX: 21]

If all of these internal and external phenomena were empty of essential existence, it would follow that not the slightest thing could come into being—arise—or pass away. Therefore, it would not make sense to maintain that one could achieve liberation by successively achieving the two nirvanas through abandonment—that is, abandoning the afflictions—and through the cessation of the appropriation of the aggregates. This is because the aggregates and the afflictions would not exist essentially. Thus, they say, things must exist essentially.

1.2 The reply

This section has four parts: showing that, given the position that things exist essentially, nirvana is not tenable; demonstrating our own account of nirvana; the refutation of contrary positions; and rebutting the charge that this refutation contradicts sūtra.

1.2.1 Showing that, given the position that things exist essentially, nirvana is not tenable

> 2. If all this is nonempty,
> Then there is neither arising nor passing away.
> Through the abandonment or cessation of what
> Does one aspire to nirvana?

Suppose all of the internal and external phenomena were not empty of essential existence. For something that exists essentially, it is impossible for it to arise anew having been nonexistent previously, and it is impossible for it to cease anew having been previously existent. Therefore, it would not make any sense to maintain that nirvana arises from the abandonment of the afflictions and the cessation of the aggregates. This is because essentially existent afflictions and aggregates could not be eliminated, because such essence is immutable.

1.2.2 Demonstrating our own account of nirvana

3. Unrelinquished, unattained,
Unannihilated, impermanent,
Unarisen, unceased:
This is how nirvana is described.

Those who assert the doctrine of emptiness do not maintain that nirvana is the subsequent elimination of previously essentially existing afflictions and aggregates. Therefore, they do not commit the error of saying that because there is neither arising nor ceasing, nirvana is impossible.

[440] "Well, then," one might ask, "what characteristics do they maintain nirvana has?" We describe nirvana as having the following characteristics: It does not exist essentially as any of these four things: desire, which has been relinquished; the fruits of the spiritual practitioner, which have been attained; the appropriation of the aggregates, which has been annihilated; or the nonempty, which would be permanent. It is neither essentially ceased nor essentially arisen, and is the complete pacification of all fabrication. So how could we, who aspire to the nirvana that is the abandonment of afflictions and the cessation of the aggregates, have a conception of the aggregates and afflictions as existing essentially? So long as one has these two conceptions, nirvana cannot be attained, because it is attained through the complete elimination of all such fabrications.

Now, suppose one thought that, although when nirvana is attained neither the afflictions nor the aggregates exist, since they existed inherently prior to its attainment, nirvana is attained through the elimination of *their* fabrications. But if they existed essentially prior to the attainment of nirvana, they could not be eliminated later. Therefore, those who aspire to nirvana should reject this view. Statements such as

Whatever is the limit of nirvana,
That is the limit of cyclic existence, [XXV: 19ab]

that will be found below, and those in the *Samādhirāja-sūtra*, such as

In nirvana there is no existence of phenomena.
Phenomena that do not exist there never exist.
Those who have conceptions of existence or nonexistence
And act accordingly never pacify their suffering. [*mDo sde* da 26b][2]

2. The sDe dge edition reads slightly differently: *mya ngan 'das pa'i chos la chos med de/gang phyir 'di med nam yang yod min 'gyur/rtog can dag gi yod dang med ce bya/de ltar spyod pa sdug bsngal zhi mi 'gyur//* instead of

mean that the realm of nirvana without residual aggregates is free from the phenomena of aggregates characterized by action, afflictions, and the arising of their effects. Therefore, their nonexistence is maintained by all parties to the debate.

By saying that the phenomena are never there—that is, that they are not ever there—**[441]** these statements show that nor do they exist in reality even in the context of cyclic existence. Then how does one wander in cyclic existence? The second two lines of this last verse state that just as such things as hairs appear to the person with cataracts, they appear as truly existent to fools who are in the grasp of the demons of false views—who grasp the self and *being mine*.

The reificationists include such people as the Jaiminī, Kāṇāda, and Kāpila, right up to the Vaibhāsikas; and the nihilists include such people as the Cārvāka, and others who maintain that the past and future, nonindicative form, and non-psychophysical aggregates are nonsubstantial, and who maintain that things other than these are substantial, as well as those who maintain that the imagined nature does not exist through its own characteristics, but that the other two natures exist inherently.

Suppose someone wondered, "The meaning of the first line of this last verse is that in the realm of nirvana without remainder, phenomena such as suffering and the sources of suffering do not exist. So, given that those who maintain that when a śrāvaka arhat gives up his life, the continuum of his consciousness is terminated assert that as well, while, according to our view, all of those arhats are maintained to attain enlightenment eventually, what is our view with regard to whether or not there are residual aggregates in their nirvana?" Here the *Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti* says,

> According to sūtra, when all of the aggregates are completely abandoned, thoroughly abandoned, completely eliminated, and exhausted, free from desire, and terminated and pacified, and when they have disappeared and do not connect to further suffering or give rise to further suffering, that is peace; that is sublime. That is, the complete abandonment of all of the aggregates and the exhaustion of craving and freedom from desire is cessation—that is, nirvana. Thus the cessation of the aggregates is theorised to be nirvana. [slight paraphrase from 10a]

Refuting the assertion that the meaning of "exhaustion" is the exhaustion of the afflictions that are part of the aggregates, it says that the exhaustion of

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mya ngan 'das la chos rnams yod nyid med/chos gang der med de dag gzhar yang med/yod dang med ces rtog pa dang ldan zhing/de ltar spyod rnams sdug bsngal nyer mi zhi/. This is an alternative Tibetan translation, and there is no significant difference in meaning.

the aggregates must be the exhaustion of the aggregates *in general*. If one maintained that this **[442]** is the exhaustion of the continuum of the aggregates, Candrakīrti shows that one would commit the following error: When the aggregates are *not* exhausted, the nirvana to be attained does not yet exist. When the aggregates *are* exhausted, the one who attains the nirvana does not exist. Thus it would be impossible to attain nirvana [*Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvṛtti, dBu ma* ya 9b].

Since at the time when one sees the essentially unarisen nature of suffering, that arising is not perceived, the suffering is simply eliminated. At the time when the five aggregates are directly perceived to be essentially nonarisen, the absence of the aggregates in that perspective is maintained to be the complete abandonment of the aggregates. This is how Candrakīrti explains it.

Thus, when the śrāvakas have completely abandoned the afflictions, from the perspective of equipoise, the vanishing—that is, the cessation—of the appearance of the aggregates, without any residue, is the nirvana without residual aggregates. At the time of the postmeditative state when the appearance has not vanished, there is nirvana with residual aggregates.

1.2.3 Refutation of contrary positions

This section has three parts: the refutation of the four extremes with respect to the existence of nirvana, showing that one who realizes nirvana does not exist in any of the four extreme ways, and drawing conclusions from this.

1.2.3.1 Refutation of the four extremes with respect to the existence of nirvana

This section has three parts: the refutation of each of the extreme assertions that nirvana is an existent or nonexistent thing, the refutation of the extreme assertion that nirvana is both, and the refutation of the extreme assertion that nirvana is neither.

1.2.3.1.1 Refutation of each of the extreme assertions that nirvana is an existent or nonexistent thing

This section has four parts: the refutation of the extreme assertion that nirvana is a thing, the refutation of the extreme assertion that nirvana is a non-thing, presenting nirvana as free from the two extremes, and showing how the teacher has condemned these two extreme views.

1.2.3.1.1.1 Refutation of the extreme assertion that nirvana is a thing

The Vaibhāṣikas say that that nirvana is that which stops the further continuation of action, affliction, and birth. It like a dam that stops the flow of water. Therefore it is a thing, because a non-thing cannot perform a function. Now, suppose someone else argued as follows: Since it is said in sūtra that nirvana is the exhaustion of the craving that is concomitant with the desire for pleasure and is the freedom from desire—that is, cessation—it **[443]** is said to be the mere exhaustion of craving,

> Just as a butterlamp is extinguished,
> His mind is completely liberated. [*Vinayakṣudrakavastu, 'Dul ba Phran tshegs* tha 291b]

Thus the mere extinguishment of the butterlamp and the mere exhaustion of the afflictions are non-things. Therefore it makes no sense that they are things.

They reply that saying "the exhaustion of craving" does not mean that the mere exhaustion of craving *is* nirvana. Instead, "the exhaustion of craving" means the exhaustion of craving that occurs *through the power of the attainment of nirvana*. Here, they say, the extinguishment of the butterlamp is a mere example that illustrates that when nirvana is achieved, the mind is freed or liberated. Therefore, they say that it is not presented in support of the claim that it is a non-thing.

> 4. Nirvana is not a thing.
> It would then have the characteristics of aging and death.
> No thing exists
> Without aging and death.

Nirvana is not a *thing* that stops the further continuation of birth and affliction, because if it were a *thing* it would follow absurdly that it would have the characteristics of aging—that is, turning into something else—and death—that is, cessation. That is because having the characteristics of aging and death are inextricable from being a thing. Nothing exists without turning into something else (aging) and ceasing (dying). By saying this, it shows clearly that aging and death are inextricable from things. If something has the characteristics of aging and death, it could not be nirvana.

> 5. If nirvana were a thing,
> Nirvana would be compounded.
> A non-compounded thing
> Does not exist anywhere.

Moreover, if nirvana were a thing, nirvana would be a compounded phenomenon. This presents the contrapositive: Neither internal nor external noncompounded phenomena, which must be dependent, exist at any place or time—on which they would depend—according to any view.

> 6. If nirvana were a thing,
> How could nirvana be nondependent?
> A nondependent thing
> Does not exist anywhere.

Moreover, if nirvana were a thing, how could nirvana not arise in dependence on its own assemblage of causes? It would have to arise like that. This presents the contraspositive by saying that there is nothing that does not arise in dependence on its own assemblage of causes. **[444]**

So, by the first and third reductios, it would have the characteristics of compounded phenomena such as arising, ceasing, and changing into something else; having shown by the second reductio that its being a compounded phenomenon—a basis of characteristics—would entail its being a thing, he refutes its being in the subordinate category of *thing* by refuting its being in the superordinate category of *compounded phenomenon.*

1.2.3.1.1.2 Refutation of the extreme assertion that nirvana is a non-thing

The Sautrāntikas and others say that although it is true that nirvana is not a thing—as it has been shown above that this would be erroneous—since it is the mere termination of birth and the afflictions, nirvana is a non-thing. They do not reject the assertion that the mere termination of the afflictions and birth—which are the objects to be rejected—is a non-thing. However, the non-thing that exists in *their* sense is not merely posited through nominal conventions, but rather is asserted to exist inherently. Therefore we reject it.

> 7. If nirvana were a non-thing,
> How could it make sense for it not to be a thing?
> Where nirvana is not a thing,
> It cannot be a non-thing.

If nirvana were a non-thing, how could it, not being a thing, exist inherently as a non-thing? It could not! Because of the errors shown to attach to the position according to which nirvana is a thing, it does not make sense to assert that nirvana exists inherently as a non-thing. This is because when that which is a thing becomes something other than that, it is called a non-thing. Since we have already refuted the essential existence of things, it would not make sense for an essentially existent thing to change into something else.

Suppose someone argued as follows: For something to become a non-entity, if some particular thing would have to become something else, this would be the case. But there are many non-things other than that particular thing. So, how has this argument refuted the claim that nirvana exists inherently as a non-thing?

We respond as follows: Although this does not apply to all non-things, if the non-thing exists inherently, it still must be a thing. **[445]** We do not commit an error, because to be a non-thing is to be a mode of cessation, that is, to be a non-thing-of-a-particular-kind. That is, one must maintain that it is something that has transformed into something else.

Now suppose someone thought that nirvana is the mere exhaustion of the afflictions and the nonexistence of rebirth that occurs through the power of actions, and therefore that it is a non-thing.

We respond as follows: If that were the case, the impermanence of the afflictions and birth would itself be nirvana. This is because the non-existence of afflictions and birth itself is nirvana, and it is not something other than that. Therefore, the impermanence of these two would be nirvana, but nobody maintains this. To maintain this would be to maintain that one could be liberated without effort.

Although the *Commentary* explains it like this, [176b], suppose someone argued as follows: when someone maintains that nirvana is merely the exhaustion of further rebirth and the afflictions, the alleged absurd consequence—*viz.,* that the impermanence of the afflictions and rebirth would be nirvana—is irrelevant.

We respond as follows: Once nirvana has been attained, the afflictions cannot possibly arise again. That kind of non-arising of the afflictions is not impermanence—that is, the disintegration at the second moment of the affliction that existed earlier. However, if the non-arising of afflictions in the future existed inherently, the affliction that existed earlier and disintegrated in the second moment would be shown not to be different objects, and therefore these two would be shown to be identical. One must accept that this argument shows that they would be the same entity. Therefore Candrakīrti does not commit that error.

> 8. If nirvana were a non-thing,
> How could nirvana be nondependent?
> Whatever is nondependent
> Is not a non-thing.

Moreover, suppose that nirvana were not a thing—that is, that it existed inherently as a non-thing. Just as as the impermanence—the disintegration—of a patch of blue, which is the patch of blue's being a non-thing—is posited in dependence on that patch of blue, why could not nirvana exist in the same way? It would be posited in dependence upon the disintegration of the thing

whose cessation it is, and that is how it is! Now, suppose that one asked, "Since there are no non-things that do not depend on things, then, in dependence on what thing is such a thing as the son of a barren woman a non-thing?"

[446] In the fifteenth chapter, it says:

> Since entity does not exist,
> Nonentity does not exist. [XV: 5ab]

Since ordinary people say that to change that which is a thing into something else is to make it a non-thing, who would say that the son of a barren woman is like a non-thing in that sense? But would this not contradict the following statement in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* that these are such non-things?

> The sky, a rabbit's horns,
> The son of a barren woman:
> Although none of these exist, they are referred to by words.
> Those that depend on things are similar. [*mDo sde* ca 175b]

Here, the mere negation of any thing is said to be a non-thing, but it does not say that these non-things exist *inherently*, because the *things themselves* do not exist inherently. Here, the statement that such things as a rabbit's horns, which do not exist, are not non-things refutes the disintegration of a thing being an *inherently existent* non-thing, but does not mean that they are not *mere* non-things. This is because they are merely the negations of concepts of things, as it has been said, and it has been explained many times in different contexts that they are non-things. Therefore, the claim stands that no non-thing that is not designated in dependence on a thing exists inherently.

1.2.3.1.1.3 Presenting nirvana as free from the two extremes

Supposed someone asked, "If nirvana does not have the nature of being a thing or a non-thing, then what is it?"

> 9. A thing that comes and goes
> Is dependent and produced by causes.
> That which is not dependent and not produced by causes
> Is taught to be nirvana.

The sentient being comes from the previous life to this life and goes from this life to the next, and thus continues from one birth and death to another, like long and short, which are posited in dependence on the assemblage of their causes and conditions, or like the light of the butterlamp, which is posited as caused by the assemblage of its causes and conditions. Neither depending on the assemblage of its causes and conditions, nor caused by the assemblage of its causes and conditions, the mere pacification of the proliferation of these

aggregates and the afflictions is taught by the Transcendent Lord to be nirvana. **[447]** Just that is neither a thing nor an inherently existent non-thing.

"Being involved in cyclic existence through dependence" means, as has been previously explained, the wandering of such things as the compounded phenomena in cyclic existence, and "being caused to be involved in cyclic existence by the appropriation of the aggregates" means, as has been previously explained, the wandering of the person in cyclic existence. Here, nirvana is regarded as the real nature of the mind, which is the basis of the abandonment of the seeds of affliction and the vanishing of the appearance of the appropriated aggregates; but nirvana is not regarded as the non-arising of homogeneous afflictions after the exhaustion of the continuum of their causes and conditions. This is because it has already been explained to be a future that is given rise to by the exhaustion of previous causes.

1.2.3.1.1.4 Showing how the teacher has condemned these two extreme views

10. The teacher has spoken of relinquishing
Becoming and passing away.
Therefore it makes sense that
Nirvana is neither a thing nor a non-thing.

Moreover, it is said in sūtra:

> Oh monks! Those who seek renunciation from cyclic existence through becoming and passing away are completely ignorant. [*Udāna III, Nandavaggo* section X, *Lokasutta,* 69]

Thus the teacher says that the craving of becoming and the craving of passing away are to be abandoned. But he said that nirvana is not to be abandoned. Therefore, it follows that nirvana is neither a thing, nor does it exist inherently as a non-thing. If it existed inherently in either of those two ways, nirvana would also definitely be something to be discarded. But it would be unreasonable to condemn anyone who aspires to renounce wandering in cyclic existence through craving, which is the attachment to and fixation on becoming—that is, things—and passing away—that is, non-things—as essentially existent.

1.2.3.1.2 Refutation of the extreme assertion that nirvana is both

An opponent might argue as follows: Because it is is not a thing—that is, affliction and taking rebirth—nirvana is a non-thing; and because it itself has

the *nature* of a thing, it *is* a thing. Therefore, the errors that have been shown to attach to each of these positions do not undermine the assertion that it exists essentially as both.

According to Avalokitavrata's commentary to the *Prajñāpradīpa,*

> The Jain philosophers maintain this. **[448]** According to them, moksha, which has the characteristic of "a compound universe,"[3] has the meaning of "life."[4] Thus nirvana is a thing. And since it is the termination of the suffering of cyclic existence, it is a non-thing as well. As it is said,
>
> > The Victor has said that at the time nirvana is achieved
> > It has the color of the scentless joss stick,
> > Milk, pearl, or frost,
> > And has the shape of an open umbrella. [vol. 3, 257a–257b]
>
> Thus they say that nirvana is situated above the entire world.

> 11. If nirvana were both
> A thing and a non-thing,
> Then things and non-things would both be nirvana.
> But that makes no sense.

If nirvana existed essentially as both a thing and a non-thing, then both a thing and a non-thing would be nirvana. In that case, compounded phenomena that have newly attained their own status in the first moment and that are absent in the second moment would be nirvana, but it makes no sense for them to be nirvana. This is just like the case of fire and smoke: If they are regarded as existing essentially different from each other and as cause and effect, the absurd consequence follows that any two things could be cause and effect. By parity of reasoning, if a particular thing and non-thing are regarded as existing essentially as nirvana, the absurd consequence would follow that all things and non-things would be nirvana.

> 12. If nirvana were both
> A thing and a non-thing,
> Nirvana would not be independent
> Because those two are dependent.

Moreover, if nirvana existed essentially both as a thing and a non-thing, then nirvana would not be independent of causes and conditions, but would arise dependently, because both things and non-things that exist essentially

3. *'jig rten 'dus pa*
4. *srog*

depend upon causes and conditions. This argument shows that in that case it would arise in dependence on a thing: If nirvana existed inherently as a non-thing, one would have to assert that it is an impermanence—the disintegration of a thing—that is, cyclic existence, which is the absence of that entity. **[449]**

> 13. How could nirvana
> Be both a thing and a non-thing?
> Nirvana is uncompounded.
> Both things and non-things are compounded.

Moreover, how could one say that nirvana could exist inherently as both a thing and a non-thing? One could not, because if it did, it would not be a non-compounded phenomenon; instead it would be a compounded phenomenon. Both the thing, and the non-thing—the exhaustion of cyclic existence—that exist inherently would both be compounded phenomena. This is because the non-thing is the disintegration of a thing. When it is said that aging and death arise from birth as a condition, this means that death—that is, disintegration—arises from birth as a condition.

Suppose someone said that we do not maintain that nirvana is essentially both a thing and a non-thing, but that it has these two properties.

> 14. How could nirvana
> Be both a thing and a non-thing?
> These two cannot be in the same place,
> Like light and darkness.

How could nirvana have both the property of being a thing and that of being a non-thing essentially? It could not! These two cannot be present inherently in the same basis because they are mutually inconsistent, like light and darkness.

But suppose someone argued that it is more like the following case: Just as the existence of a pot—a thing—and the nonexistence of a cloth—a non-thing—in the same basis are not inconsistent, the existence of the non-thing—the absence of cyclic of existence—and the existence of the thing—nirvana—are not inconsistent. We reply that if the thing and the non-thing existed through their own characteristics, then if a thing—any one of these—could exist, *any* thing could exist; and if a non-thing—any one of these—could exist, than *any* thing could *not* exist. Consequently, one would have to accept the existence and non-existence of a single thing in a single basis.

1.2.3.1.3 Refutation of the extreme assertion that nirvana is neither

> 15. Nirvana is said to be
> Neither a thing nor a non-thing.

If things or non-things could exist,
It would exist.

Nor would it make sense to present nirvana as essentially neither a thing nor a non-thing. This is because with respect to objects of knowledge, if things and non-things existed essentially, despite the refutation of some of their instances, the existence of some other instances of things or non-things might exist essentially. **[450]** However, since neither of these can exist essentially, when the existence of either one is refuted, neither of them can exist essentially. For instance, if rabbits and horns were not possible, it would not be possible for there to be a rabbit's horn whose existence could be refuted, and if sons and a barren women were not possible, it would not possible for there to be a son of a barren woman whose existence could be refuted.

16. If nirvana is
Neither a thing nor a non-thing,
Then by whom is it expounded as
"Neither a thing nor a non-thing?"

Moreover, if nirvana existed inherently as neither a thing nor a non-thing, then by whom would that nirvana be expounded as existing essentially neither as a thing nor a non-thing? Who would expound—that is, clarify and cause others to grasp—it? If, when nirvana without residual aggregates is attained, he existed, there would be a self. But you do not say this, because you do not maintain that there is a self without the appropriated aggregates, and you maintain that the continuum of aggregates is terminated when nirvana without residual aggregates is attained.

Since there is no agent, then who would know that nirvana exists in that way? But suppose someone asked, "Does someone in cyclic existence know that?" By what means could this be known? Either through an ordinary cognitive process or through wisdom? The first case makes no sense, because ordinary cognitive processes objectify the representations of elaboration, but the meaning of "direct perception of nirvana" is the absence of even the slightest representation of fabrication. In this context, to *know* is to *perceive directly*.

Nor does it make sense that it is known through the wisdom of the direct perception of reality. This is because, since this wisdom and the emptiness—the emptiness of essence—in which it is absorbed are completely congruent in nature, it does not exist essentially. Thus that could not be the means by which one knows any essentially existent nirvana. **[451]** This is because that wisdom is free from all representations of fabrication; and to grasp nirvana as essentially existent is to be bound by the grasping of representations.

This distinction between ordinary consciousness and wisdom is drawn in terms of whether or not the appearance of fabrication has disappeared, but it

is not drawn with reference to consciousness as understood in terms of the five aggregates.

1.2.3.2 Showing that one who realizes nirvana does not exist in any of the four extreme ways

17. Having passed into nirvana, the Transcendent Lord
Is neither perceived to be existent
Nor perceived to be nonexistent.
He is neither perceived to be both nor to be neither.

Just as nirvana cannot be conceptualized as falling under any of the four concepts such as being a thing, etc., he who has achieved nirvana—the Transcendent Lord—after having achieved nirvana cannot be perceived to be—that is, be grasped as—existing essentially. In the same way, the absence of the thing from which he has achieved liberation is also essentially nonexistent. Since it exists in neither of these two ways, it is not perceived to be both, and since it is not perceived to be both, it is not perceived—that is, grasped—to be essentially neither.

18. So, when the Transcendent Lord was alive, he
Was neither perceived to be existent
Nor perceived to be nonexistent.
He was neither perceived to be both nor to be neither.

Moreover, when the Transcendent Lord was alive, he was not seen to exist essentially nor, in the same way, to be nonexistent, nor was he seen to be both existent and nonexistent, nor was he seen to be essentially neither existent nor nonexistent. This has been explained in the chapter called "The Examination of the Tathāgata."

1.2.3.3 Drawing conclusions from this

This section has two parts: the congruence of cyclic existence and nirvana and establishing that the undiscussed views are rejected.

1.2.3.3.1 The congruence of cyclic existence and nirvana

19. Cyclic existence is not the slightest bit
Different from nirvana.

> Nirvana is not the slightest bit
> Different from cyclic existence.

Since there is no difference between the teacher when he was alive and when he passed into nirvana in terms of whether or not he was free from the four extremes, nirvana is no different from cyclic existence; nor is cyclic existence the slightest bit different from nirvana, in terms of whether either is real or unreal. This is because if they are analytically examined, as we have seen previously, **[452]** they are absolutely identical in terms of their nature as completely empty of essence.

> 20. Whatever is the limit of nirvana,
> That is the limit of cyclic existence.
> There is not even the slightest difference between them,
> Or even the subtlest thing.

Therefore this statement is relevant to this context:

> O monks! Cyclic existence—birth, aging, and death—is beginningless and endless. [Indirect quotation from *Hastikakṣya-sūtra, mDo sde* tsha loga cited in *Prasannapadā* 180a]

The former—cyclic existence—and the latter—nirvana—are the same in nature.

Whatever is nirvana's ultimate limit—that is, its mode of emptiness—is cyclic existence's ultimate limit—that is, its mode of emptiness. This is because there is not even the slightest difference between these two.

1.2.3.3.2 Establishing that the undiscussed views are rejected

> 21. Views regarding his status after his passing; extremes, etc.,
> And views regarding the permanent, etc.,
> Are grounded upon nirvana, the final limit,
> And the prior limit.

Since there is no difference between cyclic existence and nirvana in terms of their nature, it is not only irrational to conceive of the extremes of beginning and end, but to view the Tathāgata as essentially existing, not existing, both, or neither after his passing into nirvana is also mistakenly to regard one's own view as superior grounded on nirvana.

To view the world as existing essentially with the nature of having limits, etc., and with the nature of those indicated by "etc.,"—including having no limits, both having and not having limits, and neither—is to engage with the world grounded on the final limit. When the self and the world are seen not to be arising in the future, one develops the idea that they have an end. When

they are seen to be arising in the future, one develops the idea that they have no end. When some are seen to have ends and some are seen not to have ends, one develops the idea that they have both. When both are rejected, one develops the idea that they have neither.

To view the world as existing essentially as permanent and in the ways indicated by "etc."—including viewing it as impermanent, both, and neither—is to engage with the world grounded on the prior limit. When the self and the world are seen to have arisen in the past, one develops the idea that they are permanent. When the self and the world are seen not to have arisen in the past, one develops the idea that they are impermanent. When the self and the world are seen to be partly arisen in the past and partly not, one develops the idea that they are both permanent and impermanent. **[453]** And when are both are rejected, one develops the view that they are neither.

> 22. Since all existents are empty,
> What is finite or infinite?
> What is finite and infinite?
> What is neither finite nor infinite?
>
> 23. What is identical and what is different?
> What is permanent and what is impermanent?
> What is both permanent and impermanent?
> What is neither?

All of these views would be tenable if things existed essentially. But since all things are empty of essential existence, what things could there be to view through the extreme of existence, through the extreme of nonexistence, through the extreme of both existence and nonexistence, or through the extreme of neither? How could one view the body as life, or view the body and life as different? What things could exist as they are grasped through the views of permanence, impermanence, both permanence and impermanence, or through the view according to which there is neither? There could be none!

One should understand that those who imagine that the nature of things is to exist essentially develop these views on the basis of whether or not things are free of that nature and hence develop fixations. These fixations are obstacles on the road that leads to the city of liberation, and lead one instead to the sufferings of cyclic existence.

1.2.4 Rebutting the charge that this refutation contradicts sūtra

Suppose someone argued as follows: Since you have refuted the essential existence of nirvana, there would be no point in the teacher teaching the Dharma as an antidote to the afflictions so that sentient beings can attain liberation.

24. The pacification of all objectification
And the pacification of all fabrication is peace.
No Dharma was taught by the Buddha
At any time, in any place, to any person.

If any of the Dharma that is to be taught, the disciples, or the teacher existed essentially, this would be correct. However, just as when the king of the swans takes to the sky by flapping his wings, he flies relying on the air, and the air relies on space, so the Buddha—the Transcendent Lord who has attained nirvana and who has pacified all fabrications—remains in that peaceful state without relying on representations. In that state, all objectification—the grasping of representations—is pacified. In a context where there is no objectification, the Buddha did not teach any Dharma, either concerning cyclic existence or concerning nirvana, to anyone—whether divine or human—anywhere, **[454]** whether in the realm of the gods or in the human realm.

These two phrases, "the pacification of fabrication" and "peace" mean, respectively, the absence of engagement with representations in nirvana and peace by virtue of its very nature, or, respectively, the nonengagement with words and thoughts and the non-arising of the afflictions and birth, or the abandonment of all afflictions and their latent potentials and the absence of the objectification of objects of knowledge and knowledge. The *Tathāgatācintyaguhyanirdeśa-sūtra* says,

> Oh, Śāntamati! From the night when the Transcendent Lord attained the unparalleled, complete enlightenment until the night when, without appropriation, he will pass into parinirvana, the Transcendent Lord did not utter even a single syllable. Nor will he say anything. [*dKon brtsegs* ka 144a]

And the *Samādhirāja-sūtra* says,

Since everything is primordially pacified, stainless,
And without words or letters,
He who knows things that way
Is called the youthful Buddha. [*mDo sde* da 22b]

Now somebody might ask, "If the Buddha did not teach the Dharma to anyone, how could all of these scriptures have emerged?" To say that the teacher taught the Dharma to us means that it has arisen from the conceptual thought of the addressees who sleep in ignorance and who are dreaming.

The *Sarvabuddhaviṣayāvatārajñānālokālaṃkāra-sūtra* says,

The Tathāgata is like the reflection of
Uncontaminated virtuous phenomena.

Here neither reality nor the Tathāgata exist.
The entire world sees only the reflections. [*mDo sde* ga 284b]

Therefore, since the teachings that are presented for the purpose of attaining the goal of nirvana do not exist from the perspective of a rational realization of reality, but merely exist from the perspective of conventional cognition, **[455]** how could nirvana exist essentially?

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

A brief indication that this can be confirmed by citations from definitive sūtras is presented in order to show that the presentation in this chapter of nirvana as not existing essentially is corroborated by profound sūtras, and to show that this chapter represents the teachings of all of the sūtras that present nirvana as not truly existent and as illusionlike. A Mahāyāna sūtra says:

The non-nirvana is taught to be nirvana
By the teacher, the patron of the world.
The knot tied by the sky
Is untied by the sky itself. [*Avaivartacakra-sutra*, *mDo sde* sha 271a]

Just as those who sew with a long thread undo knots by shaking them in the air, the Transcendent Lord, who is a fully enlightened Buddha, has taught that things such as nirvana are not truly existent; they are taught to exist only by nominal convention, to be essenceless. The *Brahmaviśeṣacintiparipṛcchā-sūtra* says,

O Transcendent Lord: Some phenomena that have arising and ceasing are not arisen, Buddha!

O Transcendent Lord: Those who seek cyclic existence[5] in things are not freed from cyclic existence!

Why is that so?

O Transcendent Lord: That which is called nirvana is free of all representations, and there all conceptualizations cease!

O Transcendent Lord: Those fools who have ordained according to the discipline you have so eloquently set out in the Dharma, but have fallen into heretical views, expect nirvana to come from things, just as tahini comes from sesame seeds and butter comes from milk.

5. The Sanskrit text in *Prasannapadā* [238] reads differently and would have this as "seeking nirvana in things." The version Tsong khapa has is consistent with the Tibetan edition of *Prasannapadā* [182a]. The former is consistent with the sDe dge edition of the sūtra at *mDo sde* ba 33b.

> O Transcendent Lord: I call those arrogant people who seek nirvana in all phenomena, **[456]** which are completely liberated, "heretics."
>
> O Transcendent Lord: Yogis and those who engage in the perfect practices neither give rise to nor terminate anything. Nor do they aspire to achieve any realization. [*mDo sde* ba 33b]

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

One should ascertain that if things existed essentially, such things as the abandonment of that which is to be abandoned and the attainment of nirvana would not be possible, but they are completely tenable according to the position that everything is empty of essential existence.

This is the commentary on the twenty-fifth chapter, having twenty-four verses, called the examination of nirvana.

CHAPTER XXVI

Examination of the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 The order of dependent origination
    1.1.1 The causes and effect that propel one into life
    1.1.2 The resultant causes and effects
  1.2 The reverse order of dependent origination
2. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[456:9] We have now completed the first major part of the section on engaging with the meaning of the text—the demonstration that the dependently originated is empty by nature. This chapter constitutes the second part of that section—the presentation of the fact that whether one remains engaged in cyclic existence or frees oneself from it depends on whether or not one realizes that. This chapter has two parts: the explanation of the chapter and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Here one might ask: What is that dependent origination to which he refers in these lines?

> Whatever is dependently arisen.
> That is explained to be emptiness. [XXIV: 18ab]

And what is that dependent origination by seeing which he says in these lines that the reality of the Four Noble Truths is seen?

Whoever sees dependent arising
Also sees suffering. [XXIV: 40ab]

The explanation of this has two parts: the order of dependent origination and the reverse order of dependent origination.

1.1 The order of dependent origination

This section has two parts: the causes and effects that propel one into life and the resultant causes and effects.

1.1.1 The causes and effect that propel one into life

1. The three kinds of actions that lead to rebirth,
   Performed by one obscured by ignorance,
   Are the karma that impel one
   To further transmigration.

Ignorance is not just the absence of insight into the way things really are, nor just something different from it. Instead, it is the very opposite of that knowledge, and is completely heterogeneous with it. That is, it is the grasping of the person and phenomena as truly existent by objectifying them. In virtue of the real facts being obscured by ignorance, the person performs—that is, gives rise to—meritorious, nonmeritorious, and unshakable action—or actions of body, speech, and mind—that **[457]** lead to rebirth. He performs actions that lead to rebirth, but this does not entail that the person performs the action with that aim, but that action issues in that result. Through the power of the actions that have been given rise to in this way, beings proceed through transmigration.

2. Having action as its conditions,
   Consciousness enters transmigration.
   Once consciousness has entered transmigration,
   Name and form come to be.

Thereafter, the consciousness of the person who has accumulated the dispositions, is conditioned by action, and is the seed of existence, enters transmigrations such as that of—that is, takes birth as—a god, for instance, according to his actions. And at the very moment when the state of death ceases, just like the arms of a balance, the aggregates arise in the state of birth, as they are propelled by karma. Thereafter, when the consciousness enters the

mother's womb, and when it sinks into oblivion, with the consciousness as a condition, the four name aggregates—and the form aggregate—come to be.[1]

The other four aggregates—the name aggregates—are referred to as "name" because the consciousness, through being stained by karma and afflictions, is *led* by these aggregates to its appropriate realm of rebirth or because through discrimination they *engage* consciousness with the object.[2] Form includes such things as the embryo in this context.

> 3. Once name and form come to be,
> The six senses come into being.
> Depending on the six senses,
> Contact comes into being.

When the four name aggregates and such things as the embryo—form—come into being, then the senses, which are the doors to the arising of suffering, come into being. They are the six senses: the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the introspective sense, which arise from name and form as conditions. Although the physical and mental organs exist prior to this, the collection of the six arises at this point, and that is why they are mentioned at this stage.

Thereafter, depending on the six senses, contact arises. How does contact arise, and what is its nature?

> 4. That is only dependent
> On eye and form and retention.
> Thus depending on name and form,
> Consciousness arises.
>
> 5. That which is assembled from the three—
> Eye and form and consciousness—
> Is contact. From contact
> Feeling comes to be.

The visual consciousness arises just depending on the eye, the dominant condition; the material form, the objective condition; and retention—holding in the **[458]** mind—the immediate condition. The immediate cause—retention, for example—gives rise to visual consciousness depending on the four name aggregates—feeling, etc.,—and the first two conditions, such as material form. Their condition is the joining of the three—name, form, and conscious-

1. Sensation, perception, consciousness, and compounded phenomena are referred to as the "four name aggregates," and this is the basis of the phrase "name and form."

2. This is a Sanskrit etymological gloss, which makes no more sense in Tibetan than it does in English. "Nāma" means *name*. "Nāmyati" means *to lead to* and can also mean *engagement*. See *Prasannapadā* [239].

ness—and this is the characteristic of contact; it arises in the same way that consciousness does.

The other five kinds of contact should be understood in terms of the joining of the three—the object, the sense faculty, and consciousness—in contact through the visual assemblage. When the three join, the three kinds of objects—pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral—are discerned. Thereafter, through contact, in accord with the discernment of the pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral objects, respectively, these three—pleasure, suffering, or indifference, respectively—arise. The other five sets of feelings should be understood in terms of the feeling conditioned by contact through the visual assemblage.

Thus, *sūtrasamuccaya* says that those that are propelled are four: name and form, the six senses, contact, and feeling [*Sems tsam* ri 65b]. This includes the resultant consciousness. What propels them? Action that depends on ignorance! How are they propelled? By consciousness—the causally efficacious cognitive process pervaded by latent potentials. The meaning of "propelled" is as follows: If there are causal bases, such as craving, they make the effects possible.

1.1.2 The resultant causes and effects

> 6. Conditioned by feeling is craving.
> Craving arises for feeling.
> When one craves,
> The four objects of appropriation will be appropriated.

Thereafter, conditioned by feeling, craving arises, because to crave is to crave to be the subject of feelings. Why does one crave? The craver craves in order to experience feeling, because he is desirous of that. He craves the pleasant in order not to be away from it, he craves being away from suffering, and he craves the nondiminution of the neutral.

When there is craving **[459]**, conditioned by craving, these four objects of appropriation, which are the causes of the propelling karma, will be appropriated: desire, views, arrogance in one's own propriety and in one's own conduct, and self-grasping.

> 7. When there is appropriation,
> The existence of the appropriator arises.
> If he did not appropriate,
> Then being freed, he would not come into existence.

When there are the four objects of appropriation, the existence of the appropriator of these four—that is, he who takes birth—arises, conditioned by the appropriation. If the appropriator, through the power of the discriminative

insight which realizes the way things really are, did not entertain the craving of feelings, and if through the realization of nondualistic wisdom he ceased appropriating, then he would be liberated. This is because thereafter there would be no rebirth.

> 8. This existence is also the five aggregates.
> From existence comes birth,
> Old age, and death and misery and
> Suffering and lamentation and. . . .

One should know that the existence that is conditioned by appropriation has the nature of being the five aggregates. The virtuous and nonvirtuous actions of body, speech, and mind give rise to the existence of the five aggregates in the future. Therefore, the cause is named after its effect, and so is called "existence." Of these, the actions of body and speech belong to the material form aggregate. Mental actions by nature belong to the other four aggregates.

Other treatises[3] reject the Vaibhāṣikas' claim that the actions of body and mind should both be regarded as belonging to the form aggregate, explaining that action is mental occurring when one engages in physical or verbal activity. But Candrakīrti maintains that the actions of body belong to the material form aggregate. Although mental actions are intentional, other mental processes and mental episodes that are concomitant with that intention are said to be of the same entity. Therefore, mental action is said to belong to the four nonphysical aggregates.

Having been activated by craving and appropriation, the birth of the aggregates of the later life arises from the existence in which potent karma gives rise to rebirth.

> 9. Unhappiness and agitation.
> All these arise as a consequence of birth.
> Thus what comes into being
> Is only a mass of suffering.

From birth arises the aging—the ripening—of the aggregates, death—the cessation of the aggregates, misery—heartache that comes with the deluded attachment to the one who is dying and **[460]** the lamentation caused by that misery, the suffering of assault to the five senses, unhappiness—assault to the mind, and agitation—the mental and physical agitation that arises from unhappiness and suffering.

3. For instance, the *Abhidharmakośa IV:* 2 and *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya* [*Sems tsam* ku 166a] and Vasubandhu's *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa*. See also Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṁgraha I:* 14, 150b and Kamalaśīla's *Tattvasaṁgrahapañjikā* 152a.

Just as we explained earlier, just through the power of its own causes and conditions, the whole mass—that is, the whole array or heap—of suffering arises. Since it is essentially free from self and *being mine*, is merely imputed by fools, is suffering by its very nature, and is not even mixed with pleasure, it is said that "only a mass of suffering arises." Thus, this explains the order in which one engages with cyclic existence.

What would arise? Birth, aging, and death! What would give rise to them? The appropriation that is conditioned by craving! How does that give rise to them? When the latent potentials that the dispositions have caused to pervade consciousness are raised to potency, they give rise to existence. This shows that what comes into being is propelled by ignorance and the dispositions. Therefore, "the cause that propels and comes to fruition" refers both to the cause and effect of a single life, but does not refer to an individual life. However, the reasons that these two causes are presented separately is to distinguish between propelled suffering and the suffering to which it in turn gives rise, and to distinguish between the cause that propels and the cause that comes to fruition in the next life. The *Bhūmivastu* says:

> Since everything from consciousness to feeling, and birth, aging, and death, have interrelated characteristics, why are they presented in two different ways?
>
> That is done in order to show the distinct characteristics of suffering phenomena and in order to distinguish between that which propels and that which comes to fruition. [*Yogācārabhūmi, Sems tsam* tshi 112b]

1.2 The reverse order of dependent origination

> 10. The root of cyclic existence is action.
> Therefore, the wise one does not act.
> Therefore the unwise is the agent.
> The wise one is not, because he sees reality.

[461] The limbs of cyclic existence arise from such things as ignorance. Therefore, the primary root of cyclic existence—of such things as the entry of consciousness into the embryo—is action. Therefore, those who directly perceive the reality of dependent origination do not perform any action that would propel suffering. So the unwise, who do not directly perceive reality, are the agents of action. As it says in sūtra,

> O monks! This person, who is completely bound up with ignorance, performs meritorious actions. He also performs nonmeritorious actions. He performs unshakable actions as well. [*Śālistambha-sūtra, mDo sde* tsha 120a]

Thus the unwise are the agents, so only those who are bound up with ignorance are the agents of action, and the wise ones, who have seen reality and who have abandoned ignorance, are not agents because they see reality.

> 11. With the cessation of ignorance,
> Action will not arise.
> The cessation of ignorance occurs through
> Exercising wisdom in meditating on this.

Therefore, where there is ignorance, action arises and where is not, it does not. When ignorance ceases—that is, when it is abandoned—actions will not arise, because of the nonconsummation of their causes. What would cause that ignorance to cease? The cessation of ignorance—its exhaustion—is achieved through the wisdom by means of which one nonerroneously realizes the reality of dependent origination. Reality can be perceived directly by employing that wisdom in meditation on reality. The practitioner who perceives reality most certainly eliminates ignorance.

> 12. Through the cessation of this and that,
> This and that will not be manifest.
> That which is only a mass of suffering
> Will thus completely cease.

Having abandoning ignorance, action will have ceased. Similarly, through the cessation of the earlier limbs—the "this and that"—the later limbs—"this and that"—will not arise. These arguments show that the practitioner's suffering aggregates **[462]** are empty of existence through their own characteristic as self or as *being mine*. That which is only a mass of suffering and not at all mixed with pleasure will not arise again, and thus will completely cease—that is, be completely exhausted.

The reason that the essential existence of phenomena that has been refuted in all of the other chapters is not refuted in this chapter is that when the essential existence of the dependently originated person and phenomena are refuted, all of these limbs are also shown not to be essentially existent. Here it is shown that ignorance can be eliminated by meditation on reality as it has been presented. Thereby, through eliminating all of the remaining limbs of cyclic existence, liberation is achieved. Without adopting that view, since ignorance cannot be eliminated, the remaining limbs will thus arise, and the wheel of cyclic existence will continue to turn.

2. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

One should ascertain the mode of grasping of the two selves through innate ignorance—that is, the way that they are grasped through two kinds of igno-

rance, which grasp them as selves when perceiving the dependent origination of the person and phenomena. Thereafter, one should understand that all of these arguments are presented in order to refute the two selves as grasped by the two kinds of ignorance, and in order to develop the view through which one can realize the two kinds of selflessness as their respective antidotes. Having developed a complete understanding of the perfect view through which one can realize the two selflessnesses, through hearing, contemplation, and meditation, one should strive by all means to practice in accordance with the reverse order of dependent origination.

This is the commentary on the twenty-sixth chapter, having twelve verses, called “the examination of the twelve limbs of cyclic existence.”

CHAPTER XXVII

Examination of Views

Chapter Outline

1. Explanation of the Chapter
  1.1 Identifying the sixteen false views
  1.2 How to show that one who understands dependent origination does not rely on them
    1.2.1 Refutation of these of these views on the ground that conventional dependently arisen phenomena are like reflections
      1.2.1.1 Refutation of the first set of four views depending on the prior limit
        1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of the two views regarding its arising or not arising in the past
          1.2.1.1.1.1 Refutation of the view that it arises in the past
            1.2.1.1.1.1.1 Principal refutation
            1.2.1.1.1.1.2 Conclusion of the refutation
          1.2.1.1.1.2 Refutation of the view that it does not arise in the past
        1.2.1.1.2 Drawing the conclusion that the two views regarding the other two temporal periods are also not tenable
      1.2.1.2 Showing that thereby the first set of four views depending on the posterior is refuted
      1.2.1.3 Refutation of the second set of four views depending on the prior limit
        1.2.1.3.1 Refutation of the first two extreme views of permanence and impermanence
        1.2.1.3.2 Refutation of the final two extreme views

1.2.1.4 Refutation of the second set of four views depending on the posterior limit
1.2.1.4.1 Refutation of the first two extreme views regarding whether the world has an end
1.2.1.4.2 Refutation of the final two extreme views
1.2.2 Refutation of these views on the ground of the pacification of all fabrication in the ultimate
2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras
3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

[462:19] This chapter constitutes the third and final part of the section explaining the meanings of the individual chapters: the demonstration of how, once one understands dependent origination, the erroneous views are abandoned. **[463]** This chapter has three parts: the explanation of the chapter, the confirmation by citations from definitive sūtras, and the summary of the chapter and its name.

1. Explanation of the Chapter

Suppose one asked, "Since the *Śālistambha-sūtra* says that whoever has seen dependent origination perfectly does not rely on the extreme view that there is a beginning or the extreme view that there is an end [*mDo sde* tsha 123a], what are the extreme views that there is a beginning and that there is an end, and how is it that one should not rely on these?"

This answer to this has two parts: identifying the sixteen false views and how to show that one who understands dependent origination does not rely on them.

1.1 Identifying the sixteen false views

1. The views "in the past I was" or "I was not"
And the view that the world is permanent, etc.,:
All of these views
Depend on a prior limit.

These eight views include the following four: I existed in the past, I did not exist in the past, I both existed and did not exist in the past, and I neither existed nor did not exist in the past, as well as the following four: the world is permanent, and the others referred to by "etc.," *viz.,* the world is impermanent, the world is both permanent and impermanent, and the world is neither permanent nor impermanent. These views are called "prior" because they refer

to the bodies of lives prior to the existence of the present body. "Limit" means the earlier part of the continuum proceeding from one birth to another arises. To depend on this means to objectify it.

The views according to which I existed and did not exist and according to which the world is permanent and impermanent are like the view of the Jains, who maintain that the *being* of the previous and later lives is *identical* and that only the *aggregates* of those lives are *distinct*. To assert the view that neither is the case is just to assert the previous view in a different way, by saying that they are neither, and is like the assertion of the Sammitīya that the person cannot be said either to be permanent or impermanent. To maintain the imagined extremes has also been refuted. Through these one should understand the two alternatives that rely on the posterior limit as well.

The phrases "I was" and "I was not" refer to the two other alternatives. All of these four arise just from objectifying the self. The four views, including the view that the world is permanent **[464]** arise from focusing on the prior limit in general, and so there are differences in the way these views arise.

2. The view "in the future I will exist at another time" or "I will not do so"
 And that the world is limited, etc.:
 All of these views
 Depend on a posterior limit.

The two views that in the future I will exist at another time and that I will not do so are mere examples. The view that in the future both will occur and the view that in the future neither will occur complete the four. The view that the world is limited, and those included under "etc.," *viz.*, that it is not limited, that it is both limited and not limited, and that it is neither are another four. In relation to the present self, the future body is called "posterior" because the later part of the continuum of proceeding from one birth to another is a limit. To depend on this means to objectify it. The differences between these two groups of four views are just as they are in the previous case.

1.2 How to show that one who understands dependent origination does not rely on them

This section has two parts: refutation of these views on the ground that conventional dependently arisen phenomena are like reflections and the refutation of these views on the ground of the pacification of all fabrication in the ultimate.

1.2.1 Refutation of these views on the ground that conventional dependently arisen phenomena are like reflections

This section has four parts: the refutation of the first set of four views depending on the prior limit, showing that thereby the first set of four views depending on the posterior is refuted, the refutation of the second set of four views depending on the prior limit, and the refutation of the second set of four views depending on the posterior limit.

1.2.1.1 Refutation of the first set of four views depending on the prior limit

This section has two parts: the refutation of the two views regarding its arising or not arising in the past and drawing the conclusion that the two views regarding the other two temporal periods are also not tenable.

1.2.1.1.1 Refutation of the two views regarding its arising or not arising in the past

This section has two parts: the refutation of the view that it arises in the past and the refutation of the view that it does not arise in the past.

1.2.1.1.1.1 Refutation of the view that it arises in the past

This section has two parts: the principal refutation and the conclusion of the refutation.

1.2.1.1.1.1.1 Principal refutation

> 3. To say "I was in the past"
> Is not tenable.
> What existed in the past
> Is not identical to this one.

The view that I existed in past lives is not tenable, as this way of seeing things is not consistent with the facts. **[465]** Having focused on the self as an object, *qua* that as which one existed in the past, one grasps oneself in the form in which one existed either as essentially existent or as essentially arisen.

If that object existed as it is grasped, the two selves—the present self, when it remembers and says "I existed in that way previously," and the self that existed in the past—would be identical. But since that very self that existed in previous lives is not the self of this very life, this view is not tenable.

If the self on which one focuses when says, "I existed in the past as that one" existed inherently, the selves of the previous and subsequent lives would have to be identical. The reason is that if these two selves existed essentially, they could not escape from being either inherently identical or inherently different. Their being inherently different will be refuted later. So they would have to be identical. If the two selves of the prior and subsequent lives were identical, the self would be permanent. In that case, when a being wanders in cyclic existence, a single transmigrator would be simultaneously in many realms, such as the human and hell realms.

So, suppose one argued as follows: It says in sūtra, "At that time, in that life, I became the Cakravarti emperor Samati" [*Prasannapadā* 191a].[1] And it would not make sense for the Buddha himself to make such a statement; because the two selves—the self who earlier was Samati and the self who was then the Buddha—are not identical.

This sūtra refutes those two selves belonging to different continua, but shows them to belong to the same continuum. But it does not show that those two selves are identical. This is because the sūtra, having presented the story, says that one might think that the person with that name was another one, but that is not the right the way to see this, because saying, "I myself at that time became that person," primarily **[466]** denies their belonging to different continua. It has been explained earlier that by saying 'I,' which refers to the self, which is the person, the basis of the convention, one uses a general term that does not distinguish between particular successive temporal stages.

What is wrong with saying the two selves of the successive lives are identical?

> 4. If, according to you, that is the self,
> Then the appropriator would be different.
> Apart from the appropriator,
> What is your self?

We have already said that the absurd consequence would follow that it would be permanent. Here is another error: Suppose one thought that the very self of the previous life is the very self of this life. In that case, since there would be a single appropriator, the two appropriated sets of aggregates would

1. This quotation is from Mānadhātāvadāna, Divyāvadāna, p. 139. In the Sanskrit edition of *Presannepedā*, the emperor's name is given as *Mānndhātē*, but the Tibetan edition also has *Sameti* (*Mang pos bkur ba*).

be identical. But the two sets of aggregates are distinct. Their times and causes are distinct.

Now, suppose one thought that since it is not contradictory for two sets of aggregates to be distinct and the selves of the two distinct lives to be identical, the view that the self existed essentially in the past is tenable. If that which is to be appropriated and the self existed distinctly through their own characteristics, this would not be contradictory. But, apart from that which is to be appropriated, how could your self exist as essentially distinct from them? It could not! So this response does not make sense.

> 5. Having shown that there is no self
> Apart from the appropriated,
> If the appropriated is the self,
> Your self does not exist.

We say that the self does not exist inherently apart from the aggregates. Now, suppose one thought that those appropriated aggregates exist essentially as the self. If that were the case, the self that you maintain to exist inherently could not exist. Because it is merely a synonym of "the aggregates," this term would not refer to the self.

> 6. The appropriated is not the self.
> It arises and ceases.
> How can the appropriated
> Be the appropriator?

Nor does it make sense to say that the appropriated aggregates themselves are essentially identical to the self. For if they were, just as the appropriated aggregates arise and cease at each moment, the self would have to do so. **[467]** The reason that this makes no sense is that, if one asserted that the self is impermanent, this would be nihilism. This is because if it existed essentially, the uninterrupted continuum of rebirth from earlier to later lives would not make sense, because it would not be possible for successive lives that are distinct from one another through their own characteristics to be dependent.

If it did not cease, you would have to assert the self to be permanent. Moreover, how could that which is to be appropriated be the self—that is, the appropriator? It could not be, because since the agent and the object would be identical, it would follow that such things as the potter and pot could be identical.

> 7. It is not tenable that the self is different
> From the appropriated.
> If it were different, then without the appropriated
> It should be observed. But it is not.

Suppose one thought that it is true that the mere appropriated aggregates are not the self, but the self is essentially distinct from the appropriated aggregates. It is not tenable that the appropriating self is essentially distinct from that which is to be appropriated, because, if these two existed as inherently distinct, then it would make sense that the self would be observed without the appropriated aggregates, but this is not observed.

This argument also shows that they could not be essentially different because, if they existed as different through their own characteristics, it would not be possible for them to be dependent, and their being related would be thereby refuted; if they were unrelated and disconnected, they would have to be observed to be so. But they are not so observed.

1.2.1.1.1.1.2 Conclusion of the refutation

> 8. So it is neither different from the appropriated
> Nor identical to the appropriated.
> There is no self without appropriation.
> But it is not ascertained that it does not exist.

As it has been said earlier, since in that case the self would have to be observed without depending on the appropriated aggregates, the self does not exist essentially as distinct from that which is to be appropriated. Since to maintain that the agent and object are identical and are impermanent would be nihilism, the self is not the appropriated aggregates. The absurd consequence would follow that there would be no ground on which to posit the self. Thus, the self does not exist without depending on the aggregates.

Now suppose someone argued that, if that is the case, the self does not exist. But it is not ascertained that there is no self at all, **[468]** because it is posited depending on the basis of the aggregates. Such things as the son of a barren woman are not posited depending on the basis of the aggregates!

1.2.1.1.1.2 Refutation of the view that it does not arise in the past

> 9. To say "in the past I did not exist"
> Would not be tenable.
> This person is not different
> From whoever existed in previous lives.

Nor is the view, "in past lives I existed essentially in a form in which I existed earlier" tenable. This is because if the self of this life existed essentially

as distinct from the self of the past lives, it would have to be tenable that the self that did not exist in the past could be grasped as essentially existent. But this is not possible.

Suppose one asked, "What would be wrong with saying that the selves of the two successive lives existed inherently as different?"

> 10. If this one were different,
> Then I would exist even without it having existed.
> If this were so,
> Without that one dying, this one would be born.

If the self of this life were inherently different from the self of the previous life, then it would arise without depending on the self of the previous life, and the self of the previous life would continue to exist without cessation even though the later one is born. And thus the present being would be born without the past being having died.

Suppose someone asked, "What would be wrong with saying that the self of the present life was born without depending on the self of the past life?"

> 11. The cutting of the continuum and the nullification of karma would follow;
> The karma accumulated by some
> Would be experienced by others.
> This and other such absurdities would follow.

There would be lots of errors! Since the previous self would have already disintegrated in that life, and since the self that is essentially different from it would be born in this life, the continuum of the self of the previous life would be broken. This is because it would not be tenable for the later self to arise from the previous self. If the continuum of the previous self were broken, then the karmic connection to the effect would be broken, since its basis would no longer exist. Without the experiencer of the karma, the effects of the karma would be nullified.

Suppose someone maintained that the effect of the karma generated by the earlier self is experienced by the later self. Even in that case, absurd consequences would follow. For instance, the effect of the karma generated by someone's continuum would be experienced by another continuum. This problem and other similar ones are discussed in the seventeenth chapter:

> If action were not produced, **[469]**
> One would have to fear encountering something not engendered.
> [XVII: 23ab]

> 12. Nothing comes to exist from something that did not exist.
> Absurd consequences would follow from this:

The self would be produced,
Would arise anew, or be without a cause.

Moreover, if the self that is born in this life were essentially different from the self of the previous life, then the self that is the basis of the conventional thought 'I' would arise from that which did not exist earlier. But that which is later cannot arise from that which did not exist earlier, because, if you maintain this, unacceptable consequences will follow: If the self arises from that which did not exist earlier, the self would be produced by a cause. But those who maintain that the self is a substantial existent assert that it is inexpressible whether the self is permanent or impermanent. If it is produced, it must be impermanent.

Moreover, if the self is not different from the agent that produces it, how could it make sense that it is produced? If one thought the self were produced, then, as the *Commentary* says, the following errors would ensue: There would be a beginning to cyclic existence and new sentient beings would come into existence [193b–194a]. How would these errors ensue? Suppose one said that the selves of the sequential lives are inherently different from one another. Then it would not be tenable, without specifying the selves in terms of such things as the temporal periods of sequential lives, that his general self, on which he focuses when the thought 'I' occurs to Lhejin, is essentially different from the self of this life of that person. Thus, one would have to say that they are essentially identical. But in that case, just as the self of *this* life is born anew without having existed earlier, the *mere* self would also be arisen in that way.[2] Therefore, the erroneous consequence would follow that the mere self would have a beginning and that the self of a sentient being would arise anew without having existed in a previous life. If the mere self were to arise anew in this life, there would have to be another self preceding it that produces it. **[470]** But since there is not, it does not make sense to say that the mere self arises anew in this life. If Lhejin's mere self arose anew in this life, it would thus arise causelessly, because prior to it the continuum with which Lhejin's self is identical would not have existed and because the self of this life must be preceded by the self that produces it.

"Or" means *alternatively*. Thus one would have to say on the one hand, either that the self is produced or that "I do not assert that the self did not exist in the past," or on the other hand, either that the self arises causelessly, or that "I do not assert that the self did not exist in the past."

2. The *mere* self and the *general* self are the same in this context.

1.2.1.1.2 Drawing the conclusion that the two views regarding the other two temporal periods are also not tenable

> 13. So, the views "I existed," "I didn't exist,"
> Both, or neither
> In the past
> Are untenable.

As was discussed previously, neither the view that I existed essentially in a previous form earlier, nor the view that I was essentially nonexistent in a previous form is tenable. Since neither of them is individually tenable, the view that I both existed earlier and did not exist earlier is not tenable either. Since neither is tenable, on the ground of their refutation, neither the view that I essentially existed, nor that I did not exist in a previous form nor neither is tenable.

Thus, those who see dependent origination as it is do not rely on views that depend on the prior limit. While those who do not see reality see things differently from the way they in fact exist, those who understand dependent origination do not have such fixations. Thus the conventional 'I' which is the referent of the statement "I existed in that form earlier" is not the person at the time he is speaking, but it refers to the *mere* person, which is spread over many lives without specifying particular sequential lives. If one understands this approach, **[471]** then one will eliminate wrong views relying on the prior limit such as the view that the meaning of the many statements by the Buddha, "I existed earlier in that form" mean that the Buddha is identical to the persons who existed in those previous lives. Thus through eliminating wrong views depending on the prior limit, one will also eliminate wrong views relying on the posterior limit as well.

1.2.1.2 Showing that thereby the first set of four views depending on the posterior is refuted

> 14. To say "in the future I will exist" or
> "I will not exist":
> Such views are like
> Those involving the past.

The refutation of the views that there is essential existence in the context of the fact that I will exist in some future time and that I will essentially not exist in some future time follows the refutation of the views that I existed in the past and that I did not exist in the past. Therefore they can be refuted by rearranging several verses of the text, such as the following:

To say "I will exist in the future"
Is not tenable.
What will exist in the future
Is not identical to this one.[3]

These verses refute the identity of the selves of sequential lives.

To say "in the future I will exist"
Would not be tenable.
This person is not different
From whoever will exist in future lives.[4]

These verses refute the two selves being different from each other. Thus they should be applied similarly.

1.2.1.3 Refutation of the second set of four views depending on the prior limit

This section has two parts: the refutation of the first two extreme views of permanence and impermanence and the refutation of the final two extreme views.

1.2.1.3.1 Refutation of the first two extreme views of permanence and impermanence

15. If a god were a human,
Then it would be permanent.
The god would be unborn.
For that which is permanent is unborn.

Here, consider a human transmigrator who, because of his virtuous actions, transmigrates to a divine realm. In this case, if both the human and the god exist essentially, are they inherently identical or are they inherently different? In the first case, one would have to say that this very god is a man. And in that case, this man would be permanent, because without giving up his human identity he takes birth as a god. Or, on the other hand, it would follow that the man does not take birth as a god, because that which is permanent is birthless. Therefore the view that the world is permanent, focusing on the prior limit, **[472]** is not tenable.

3. This is a rearrangement of XXVII: 3.
4. This is a rearrangment of XXVII: 9.

16. If a human were different from a god,
Then it would be impermanent.
If the human and the god were different,
Their continuum would not be tenable.

If the man were essentially different from the god, then, just as the mango tree and the neem tree do not belong to the same continuum, the man and the god cannot be regarded as belonging to the same continuum. This is because those that are different in virtue of their own characteristics cannot be cause and effect. Therefore, the previous continuum of the man, which is impermanent, would be broken.

If the man were essentially different from the god, then it would not be tenable for both of them to belong to the same continuum, but the later continuum is a continuation of the previous continuum. Therefore, the view that the world exists essentially impermanently, focusing on the prior limit, is also untenable.

1.2.1.3.2 Refutation of the final two extreme views

Suppose someone argued as follows: This man partly gives up his human body and partly takes up a divine body. Therefore neither the error of saying that he is entirely permanent nor that of saying that he is entirely impermanent is committed.

17. If he were partly divine
And partly human,
He would be both permanent and impermanent.
That would make no sense.

This is like the view according to which the man and the god of successive lives are identical in terms of their being or self and distinct in terms of their bodies. If this man were partly—in terms of his self—a god, and partly—in terms of his body—a man, then since part of the god endures in the man, he would be permanent. And since part of the man ceases when he becomes a god, he would be impermanent. But it does not make sense that a human being partly belongs to a divine realm and partly belongs to a human realm. Therefore, the view that the world is both permanent and impermanent, focusing on the prior limit, is also untenable.

If the self were inherently both permanent and impermanent, then one would have to maintain that it would inherently be neither permanent nor impermanent. Since both of those have already been refuted, this is not the case. Here the *Commentary* says,

> If there were slightest permanent thing, and if it were later seen as impermanent, **[473]** in virtue of that, it would be established as not permanent. And if there were the slightest impermanent thing, and if it became permanent, in virtue of that, it would be established as not impermanent. [195a]

One might ask, "What does this argument mean?" Here is what it means: Consider the case of a man who is reborn as a god. If in that god there were a permanent self of a man, since it would have taken a divine body it would have given up its human aggregates. In virtue of that, it would not be permanent. If there were essentially existent impermanent human aggregates to be given up when the divine body is taken up, even though the human aggregates cease, the one who gives them up would be permanent; in virtue of that, he would not be impermanent. If such a case could occur, then the extreme view that he is neither permanent nor impermanent would make sense; but no such case cannot occur.

> 18. If it could be established that
> He is both permanent and impermanent,
> Then one would have to say that
> He is neither permanent nor impermanent.

This is an explanation according to which, of the two alternatives, the alternative that the self is *neither* permanent nor impermanent is just a different way of putting the alternative that the self is *both* permanent and impermanent.

Suppose someone argued as follows: Since there are things that wander continuously from one birth and death to another in cyclic existence from beginningless time, and that still wander, there is a permanent wanderer in cyclic existence, and that is the self.

> 19. If anyone had come from anyplace
> And were then to go anyplace,
> It would follow that cyclic existence was beginningless.
> This is not the case.

If any self or set of aggregates essentially came from any previous life to any life, and then again went to any other life, it would follow that cyclic existence is beginningless. It would then be the case that there would be an essentially existent transmigrator who transmigrates in cyclic existence from beginningless time. But this is not the case, because, as has already been explained in the sixteenth chapter, it is untenable that any essentially existent self or set of aggregates—whether it is permanent or impermanent—comes from another life to this life or goes from this life to another life. Therefore, it does not make sense that the transmigrator exists essentially.

20. If nothing is permanent,
What could be impermanent,
Permanent and impermanent,
Both of these are eliminated?

Thus, as it has been explained earlier, since there is no permanent transmigrator, how could there be any impermanent thing that gives up the previous aggregates while it takes birth? There could not be! Since neither the permanent nor the impermanent [474] is seen to exist essentially, how could there be either that which is both permanent and impermanent or that in which both permanence and impermanence are eliminated—that is, that which is inherently neither permanent nor impermanent? Therefore, the view that the world is inherently neither permanent nor impermanent, objectifying the prior limit, is not tenable.

1.2.1.4 Refutation of the second set of four views depending on the posterior limit

This section has two parts: the refutation of the first two extreme views regarding whether the world has an end and the refutation of the final two extreme views.

1.2.1.4.1 Refutation of the first two extreme views regarding whether the world has an end

21. If the world had an end,
How could there be a next world?
If the world had no end,
How could there be a next world?

If a worldly sentient being ended—that is, disintegrated—after this life, and did not arise as another sentient being later, how could there be a next worldly sentient being? There could not be! Since a next life exists, it is not tenable that the worldly being has an end. If, as some claim, worldly sentient beings do not have an end, then if there is no end—disintegration—at the end of this life, how could the next worldly sentient being come to be? It could not, because without the death of the sentient being of this life, his later birth cannot occur. Therefore, it is not tenable that the world is limitless.

22. Since the continuum of the aggregates
Is like the flame of a butterlamp,

It follows that neither its finitude
Nor its infinitude makes sense.

The continuum of the aggregates, which continues uninterruptedly, connecting causes to effects, and ceasing every moment, is like the light cast by the butterlamp. Therefore, it makes sense neither that there is an end of the worldly beings as they disintegrate at the end of this life and they do not exist later nor that there is no end—that is, disintegration—after this life. How could that be?

23. If the previous ones had ceased,
And depending on these aggregates
Those aggregates would not arise,
Then the world would be finite.

If the previous human aggregates had ceased, and depending on these aggregates, the later aggregates—which belong to the divine life—did not arise, then, just like the butterlamp that has exhausted its fuel, the worldy sentient being would come to an end. But, since the subsequent bodies arise, there is no such end. **[475]**

24. If the previous ones had not ceased,
And depending on these aggregates
Those aggregates did not arise,
Then the world would be infinite.

If the previous human aggregates cease at the end of this human life, and the divine aggregates did not arise depending on them, because they would have not lost their identity there would be no end—that is, disintegration—of the worldly sentient beings. But since the previous aggregates cease, and the subsequent aggregates—which are their effects—arise, it is not tenable that worldly sentient beings are infinite.

1.2.1.4.2 Refutation of the final two extreme views

25. If it were partly finite and
Partly infinite,
Then the world would be finite and infinite.
This would make no sense.

If the worldly sentient beings were partly finite—that is, partly ceasing—and partly infinite—that is, persisting into the next life—then the worldly sentient beings would be both finite and infinite. But to exist in that way does not make sense.

However, one might ask, "Why does it not make sense that they are partly ceased and partly not-ceased?"

26. How could one think that
The appropriator has partly ceased
And has partly non-ceased?
This does not make sense either.

Do you regard them as the self—that is, the appropriator of the aggregates—or as the aggregates that are to be appropriated? The first case does not make sense, because there is no justification at all for saying that the appropriator self has partly ceased and partly not ceased. Therefore, since the master sees no justification, he has said that it makes no sense to think that the appropriator has both the nature of having ceased and not having ceased.

Here is an alternative interpretation: Having in mind the fact that it has already been shown through the fivefold analysis that the appropriator does not exist essentially, he does not present the justification here. Here is another way to see this: If the appropriator partly ceases and partly does not cease, then the single appropriator would be partly god and partly man. But this is not maintained by the opponent. With that in mind, the master simply says that it does not make sense without providing any justification.

27. How could one think that
The appropriated has partly ceased
And partly not ceased?
This does not make sense either.

The second case does not make sense either, because **[476]** there is no justification for saying that the aggregates to be appropriated in part cease and in part do not cease, because the aggregates do not exist essentially, and because it would follow absurdly that they would be partly human and partly divine. Thus it makes no sense to think that the nature of that which is to be appropriated is twofold. Therefore, the view is not tenable that the worldly sentient beings are both finite and infinite.

28. If it could be established that
It is both finite and infinite,
Then one would have to maintain that
It is neither finite nor infinite.

If the worldly beings existed both as finite and infinite, we would have to maintain that the worldly beings are neither finite nor infinite, having refuted these two positions individually. However, since that which is to be refuted does not exist inherently, its negation must also not exist inherently. Here, a different way of asserting the worldly beings being neither finite nor infinite is refuted by the argument presented earlier that refutes the statement that the

world is neither permanent nor impermanent. Therefore, the view that it is neither finite nor infinite is also not tenable.

1.2.2 Refutation of these views on the ground of the pacification of all fabrication in the ultimate

> 29. Alternatively, because all entities are empty,
> Which views of permanence, etc., would occur,
> And by what means, with respect to what, to whom,
> And why would they occur at all?

Maintaining that all dependently originated phenomena are like reflections, as was explained earlier, he says "alternatively," referring to the demonstrations that none of the phenomena posited by the views exist even conventionally. Thereby he presents a reason that the claim that things exist ultimately as they are posited by these views is untenable. This entire text has already shown, by means of the premise that all things are dependently arisen, that they are empty of essence.

There is nothing that is not comprised by the categories of instrument, object, agent, and reason for action: Such views as those that things are permanent and those indicated by "etc.," *viz.*, that they are impermanent, both, and neither; the objects which, in virtue of being objectified, the views arise; **[477]** the agent—the person or the entity based on these aggregates—in the continuum of which the views arise; the reason that the views arise. Because none of these exist ultimately even the slightest bit, all of these are ultimately non-arisen. Just as the son of a barren woman is not seen, his blueness or whiteness is not seen either.

2. Confirmation by Citations from Definitive Sūtras

If one understands the eloquent refutation through the foregoing arguments of the person and phenomena—which are dependently originated—having the nature of existing through their own characteristics, one cannot be misled by wrong views fabricated by our own or other schools, such as the false views that rely on the prior limit. If one meditates on the fact of selflessness—that is, the essential point to be derived from the ascertainment of reality—one will be liberated from cyclic existence. Through meditation on the fact of selflessness, which is established through extensive arguments, one will eliminate the obstacles to enlightenment. Thus the *Śālistambha-sūtra* says,

> Whoever sees dependent origination constantly and continuously through perfect wisdom, exactly as it is, sees that which is void of

> life, the way things are, the nonerroneous, the birthless, the nonarisen, the uncreated, the unproduced, the unobstructed, the unobscured, the peaceful, the unceased, the irrevocable, the inexhaustible, and sees the nature of things as pacified.
>
> He who sees things perfectly as nonexistent, as straw, as chaff, as essenceless, as diseased, as a boil, as misery, as vice, as impermanent, as suffering, **[478]** as empty, as selfless does not rely on the prior limit, wondering, "Did I exist in the past?" "Did I not exist in the past?" "In what form did I exist in the past?" or "How did I exist in the past?" Nor does he rely on the posterior limit, wondering, "Will I exist in the future?" "Will I not exist in the future?" "In what form will I exist in the future?" or "How will I exist in the future?" Nor does he rely on the present, wondering, "What is this?" "What is this like?" "What becomes what?" "Where do these sentient beings come from?" or "Where will they go after they die?"
>
> Those in the world who subscribe to the views of the Brahmins and the śramaṇas, such as the views associated with the existence of the self, the views associated with the existence of sentient beings, the views associated with the life force, the views associated with the person, or the views associated with fortune and luck—when they advance in a special way and advance towards freedom—abandon these assertions, because having completely understood, they cut them off at the root, just as when the crown of the plantain tree is cut, it does not grow any further. Then the worthy Śāriputra applauded and rejoiced in what the bodhisattva, the great bodhisattva Maitreya said, and stood up and departed. [*mDo sde* tsha 122b]

3. Summary of the Chapter and Its Name

All of those who belong to the family of the supreme vehicle, urgently driven by great compassion they have cultivated, are steadfast in this attitude: "I will relieve all suffering sentient beings, who are suffering from any of the three kinds of suffering, and will lead them to complete enlightenment." **[479]** For this purpose, they cultivate aspirational bodhicitta—that is, the aspiration to attain unparalleled enlightenment—with firm resolution at the beginning.

Seeing that without the practice of the six perfections of the bodhisattva this resolution cannot be fulfilled, they undertake engaging bodhicitta through the perfect rites, and thus take up the great burden of training in the practices of the sons of the Victor. Seeing that the principal practice for those for whom the training in the six perfections is the heart of their practice is the middle path that abandons the two extremes, they seek the perfect view of the final

reality of things—the definitive meaning—just as it has been established by the arguments presented in master's text, which we have explained above.

Having obtained that, and having seen that without mental quiescence, even though one has developed the view of the way things really are, the afflictions cannot be subdued, they strive to achieve the practice of mental quiescence, and they exert effort in meditation on the perfect view. Therefore, the view that is established in this text should be cultivated through this kind of practice. All of these stages are presented extensively in *The Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*.

The manner of seeking the view in order to find the definitive meaning, referring to the final reality of phenomena, is to be applied not only in the vehicle of the perfection of wisdom, but should also be applied to the tantric vehicle, because with respect to the meaning of reality, there is no difference between the two Mahāyāna vehicles.

This is the commentary on the twenty-seventh chapter, having thirty verses, called "the examination of views."[5]

5. While Tsong khapa has reserved the thirtieth verse for separate comment in the prostration chapter, he follows Candrakīrti in regarding it as part of the final chapter.

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Prostration to the Teacher in Gratitude for His Kindness in Teaching

[480] This the third and final portion of the exposition of the content of the text: the prostration to the teacher in gratitude for his kindness in teaching.

> 30. I prostrate to Gautama
> Who, through compassion,
> Taught the exalted Dharma,
> Which leads to the relinquishing of all views.

This is a prostration to the unparalleled teacher who gave this teaching. What Dharma did he teach? He taught the Dharma, which is called "exalted" because it is the Dharma of the exalted āryas and because it is laudable since it completely eliminates the sufferings of cyclic existence. Alternatively, because it is excellent, it is called "exalted."

It is called "the Dharma" because it holds one back from falling from the cliffs of the views according to which cyclic existence and nirvana are the referents of the representations "that which is to be abandoned" and "that which is to be achieved," respectively. This is because the word "dharma" is explained to be derived from "dhara" which means *to hold*.

This exalted dharma is peaceful. That is, it is the pacification of conceptual construction and is free from the eight extremes: cessation and arising, annihilation and permanence, coming and going, and distinction and identity. The motivation behind the teaching of this Dharma is not the desire to receive offering, services, or reciprocal benefits, but it is the great compassion that embraces suffering transmigrators.

What is the purpose of this Dharma? Seeing the view through which one grasps the representation of the two kinds of self as the source of all faults, he

gave this teaching so that one might relinquish all views through which one grasps representations.

What is the name of the teacher? Since he was born into the family of the sage Gotama, he was called "Gautama." Although this verse belongs to the twenty-seventh chapter, it is presented here separately as a prostration, having in mind gratitude towards the teacher for his kindness in teaching that the meaning of dependent origination is the essencelessness of all phenomena, as it has been presented above. *Madhyamakāvatāra* says,

> Since phenomena arise dependently,
> These thoughts cannot be fabricated.
> Therefore, through the argument from dependent arising,
> One can cut through the network of false views. [VI: 115]

[481] *Prasannapadā* also, by recalling here the statement in the homage verses that dependent origination is free from the eight extremes, shows, both at the beginning and at the end of the text, that only through the argument from dependent origination—that is, the arising in dependence on causes and conditions—can one refute the eight extreme views and all other false views [198b]. The entire body of the text also explains this. Therefore, one should strive to understand the argument from dependent arising, the king of all arguments. Then, one should strive to cultivate within one's own and others' continua the view that is the essence of the definitive meaning of the profound middle way.

Afterword

[481:7] This is the third part of the text: the afterword.

The Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way: The Text Called Wisdom is title of the text, the meaning of which has been explained. The meaning of "Mahāyāna" is, as we said previously, *that in which the selflessness of phenomena is explained extensively*. This is referred to as "abhidharma" because it belongs to that collection of teachings. That this is the perfect teaching of the way things really are—that is, the ultimate—means that this has been taught in the light of the ultimate abhidharma. "The perfection of wisdom" refers to such *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras as the *One Hundred Thousand Verse Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra*. The great master Nāgārjuna, who illuminated the approach to wisdom presented in those sūtras, possessor of unexcelled wisdom and compassion, who has illuminated the approach taken by the supreme vehicle of the tathāgatas as it had been predicted that he would do, who after achieving the first ground—that of joyfulness—has gone to the blissful land, who has been predicted by the Buddha to become the victor known as the Tathāgata Jñānākaraprabha in the future in the world known as Prasannaprabha, has completed this text.

This text—*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*—has been translated into Tibetan from Sanskrit and has been edited lexically and semantically on the instructions of the great lord of prosperity King dPal lha btsan po [482] by the great Indian master of Madhyamaka, Jñānagarbha, and the Tibetan translator, the monk Cog ro klu'i rgyal mtshan. The text has 449 verses and is 1½ *bam po* in size.[1] The text was felicitously re-edited at a later time by consulting the com-

1. One bam po is three hundred verses.

mentaries by Pandit Mathāsumati from Anupamanagara and the Tibetan translator, the Sakya monk Nyima grags.

The supreme sage, driven by compassion for the beings
Wandering in a fog of fabrications, through the great treasure of eloquent speech,
Showers the nectar of the noble Dharma.
The greatest of these showers is
That which, when it is realized, clears away all defects:
The discourse of the profound dependent origination,
That is referred to as emptiness of essence, and which
Is also known as "the middle path free from the extremes."

Although all of the treatises praise this path,
It is not clear to those of our own and other schools,
Because it is obscured due to views that grasp the extremes.
Because he saw this, the second Victor, Nāgārjuna
Who was predicted by the Leader in many sūtras and tantras,
Composed the supreme text *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*
That expounds emptiness, the heart of the doctrine of the teacher,
Free from the extremes of existence and nonexistence.

Although this text is expounded by many scholars
Who subscribe to the system of the master,
The entirety of the thought of the master is
Expounded by the two commentaries of
Buddhapālita, the accurate commentator and supreme practitioner
And of the glorious Candrakīrti, who soars without obstruction in the sky of scripture,
And who is the moon whose cool light dispels the heat of extreme views. **[483]**
These two commentaries are like the sun and moon in the sky.

But since they are subtle and difficult to understand,
Their tradition has declined for ages.
Having seen this situation, relying uninterruptedly on Mañjuśrī,
The treasure of wisdom, I studied all of the scriptures,
Especially all the Madhyamaka texts,
For a long time. Thereby, I perfectly realized
The profound meaning as explained by these two scholars.
This commentary is an outcome of that realization.

As I have been requested to do so by the great king, who
In virtue of his vast collection of merit,
Protects the doctrine through his benevolent actions
And whose virtuous renown extends to all directions, and who,

Like the crown of the banner that is the ornament of the people,
Bestows the fruits of the prosperity of high status,
And by the great holder of teachings, dKon mchog tshul khrim,
As well as by many other noble persons, I composed this text.

This profound meaning is extremely difficult to understand,
My intelligence is limited, and my perseverance is weak.
Therefore, if there is any defect in it,
I apologize wholeheartedly for it.
Here, through the virtues accumulated with great effort,
Like a brilliant white moonstone,
May all who are tightly bound by extreme views
Easily attain the view that is free from the extremes.

May the doctrine be held for a long time by countless scholars who realize
That very dependent origination, that is the only eye
Through which one can see the reality taught by the Buddha,
Which comes from Nāgārjuna, chief among all philosophers.
May I, being held in all of my lives by the great wisdom treasure,
Mañjuśrī, hold, without relinquishing, even at the cost of my life,
The teachings of the noble Dharma in general,
And particularly the teachings of dependent origination.

This text called *Ocean of Reasoning* is a commentary on the text called *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, The Text Called "Wisdom."* **[484]** It is composed by the monk Lobzang grags pa, who has studied extensively and who is a practitioner of the great Madhyamaka, which is free from all extremes, and who has touched the feet of so many noble teachers, such as the ven Kumāramati, who has unparalleled compassion and wisdom, and who is the chief of those who hold the banner of the doctrine as a sign that it will not decline.

The scribe was the monk bSod nams bLo gros.

May this enable the precious doctrine to be spread in all directions.

Dharali 2002
Jémez Springs 2004
Manōa 2005

May whatever merit has been achieved by this work be dedicated to the liberation of all sentient beings from cyclic existence.

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APPENDIX I

Tibetan-English Glossary

Tibetan	**English**
kun nas mgar sems pa	antipathy towards others
kun nas nyon mongs pa'i phyogs	pertaining to samsara
kun tu sbyor ba	to enmesh
kun rdzob	conventional
skye byed	faculties
rkyen nyid 'di pa tsam	merely being conditioned
rkyen nyid 'di pa tsam gyi rten 'byung	merely conditioned dependently arisen phenomena
skabs kyi don	the matter at hand
skur 'debs	blasphemy/deprecation/denigration
skye bzhin pa	in the process of arising
skye srid	state of birth
skyon spong	rebuttal of the critique
skyon spong dgag pa	refuting the rebuttal of the critique
khyab mnyam	coextensive
khyab pa	categorized as/to be entailed
khyab pa spyir brjod pa	categorical thesis
khyab bya	subordinate category
khyab byed	superordinate category
khyad chos	attribute/quality/property
khyad par du byas pa	to satisfy a predicate/qualified by
khyad par sbyar ba	supplying the middle term/applying the modifying term
'khor	subordinate
'khor ba 'jug ldog	engaging with and detaching from cyclic existence
go bkag pa	exclusion
dgag dka' sa	most difficult object of refutation
mgo snyoms	similarly/by parity of reasoning

mgo mtshungs	similarity
'gal ba	contradictory/inconsistent
'gal ba mi mthun phyogs	diametrical opposite
'gog pa'i rigs pa	refutatory argument
'grel tshul	hermeneutical method
rgyu ba	movement/wandering
rgyu mthun gyi 'bras bu	concordant result
rgyu gzugs	causal form
rgyun gyi mtha'i mi rtag pa	impermanence in virtue of the termination of the continuum
sgra rtog gi spros pa zhi ba	free from conceptual and verbal fabrication
sgra rtog gi tha snyad	linguistic and conceptual conventions
sgro btags pa	fabrication
sgro 'dogs	fabrication/superimposition
sgrub bya	conclusion/proposition/thesis
sgrub byed	means/premise/proof/that which brings something into existence
bsgos pa	marked by
bsgrub bya'i chos	property ascribed by the conclusion
nga yi ba	*being mine*
ngar 'dzin	self-grasping
nges pa	to ascertain
nges pa can	definite property
nges pa rten du gtong ba	to confirm
nges legs kyi grub byed	means to achieve definite goodness
ngo bo nyid kyis	inherently
ngo bo nyid kyis yod pa	inherently existent
dngos kyi don	primary meaning/main point
dngos 'gal	diametrical opposite
dngos po	existent/entity
dngos po'i ngo bo nyid smra ba	reificationists/substantialists
dngos por smra ba	substantialists/reiticationists
dngos med	nonexistent/nonentity
mngon du byas pa	realization
mngon du phyogs pa	about to
mngon mtho	high status
mngon par zhen pa	obsession/fixation
snga ma	priority
snga phyi	sequence
chos can	fact/example/instance
chos nyid	the very nature/reality
chos tsam	mere phenomena
'chi srid	state of death
ji snyed pa	empirical phenomena
mjug bsdu ba	conclusion
'jig tshogs	transitory assemblage/transitory aggregates
'jig rten pa	mundane/ordinary/everyday life
'jig rten pa'i tha snyad	mundane convention
'jig rten las 'das pa	supramundane

'jig tshogs lta	view objectifying the transitory assemblages/transitory aggregates
'jug pa	engagement/to enter/to be present/to ensue/to be involved/to engage with
'jug gzhi	referent/basis of characteristics
'jog pa	to set out/to posit/to state/to regard
'jog tshul	framework for understanding/mode of positing
rjes su 'gro ba	instantiated in/to follow
rjes su shes pa	wisdom of having abandoned the desire realm
rjes su shes pa'i bzod pa	resoluteness pertaining to the upper realms
nyi tshe ba	partial
nyes skyon	faults
nyon mongs pa	afflictive emotions
gnyug ma	intrinsic
gtong ba	release
btags sa	basis of imputation
btags yod	imputed entity
rten can	that which depend on (them)
rtog ge	sophistry
rtog ge ba	sophist
rtog par byed pa	analysis/examination/investigation
rtogs pa'i chos	realized dharma
ltos	dependence
ltung ba'i gnas	pitfall
brten nas btags pa	dependent designation
tha snyad	nominal convention/convention
tha snyad gdags pa	to apply a term
thal ba bzlog pa rtags kyi khyab pa	the reasoning which is the contrapositive of the reductio
thal chos	target of the reductio
thal rtags bzlog pa	negation of the premise for the absurd conclusion
ther zug	immutable
thob pa	accrual
thog pa'i reg bya	obstacles to contact
mthar thug dpyod pa	ultimate analysis
mthun dpe	confirming example
dad pa	confident reliance
dal 'byor	time and resources
de kho na nyid	the way things really are
de bzhin nyid	reality
gdams ngag	teaching
bdag gi ba	being-possessed-by-the-self/*being mine*
bdag nyid kyis grub pa	inherent existence
bdag po' 'bras bu	environmental result
bden 'dzin blo lhan skyes	innate cognitive process grasping things as truly existent
ldan min 'du byed	non-psychophysical aggregates
ldog pa	facet
ldog pa gcig pa'i dpung 'phul	to knock over the first domino

ldog pa'i khyad pa	contrary categorization
bsdu ba ngo bo bzhi	four grounds of attraction
gnod pa	undermine/impugn/discredit
gnod par byed	dismantling
rnam 'jog	defining characteristic
rnam 'jog gi rgyu	justification
rnam pa	representation
rnam par bcad pa	to eliminate/to terminate/
rnam par byong ba' phyogs/	pertaining to nirvana
rnam par rig byed kyi gzugs	indicative form
rnam par rig byed ma yin pa'i gzugs	nonindicative form
rnam bzhag	ontology/ontological status/philosophical system/system
snod bcud	internal and external worlds
dpe don la sbyar ba	the matter to which the analogy is to be applied
dpyad bzod	to withstand analysis
spyi mtshan nyid	universal characteristics
spyod pa	to engage
spros pa	elaborations/fabrication
phan tshun spangs 'gal	mutually exclusive and exhaustive
phas rgol	antagonists
phung gsum	third possibility
phyag dar khrod	cast-off rags
phyin ci ma log pa	undistorted
phyin ci log	erroneous/deviant
phyin ci log tu snang ba	to appear other than as they are
phyogs snga	opponent
'phen pa	to project
'phral rgyu	extraneous cause
bar chad med lam	unobstructed path
byed rgyu	facilitating cause
bye brag	instance/particular
blo lhan skyes	innate cognitive process
dbang po	sense faculties
'bag bar byed pa	to saturate
'brel med	unrelated
'bras bu'i gzugs	resultant form
ma nges pa	failure of entailment
ma nges pa'i skyon	fallacy of accident
ma brtags par grub pa	to be able to be taken to exist as long as it is not analyzed
ma yin dgag	internal negation
mi 'khrul ba	inextricable from
mi sgrib pa	unobstructedness
mi rigs	makes no sense/is unreasonable/is irrational
mi rung ba	makes no sense/is impossible
mi slob pa	requiring no more training
mig gi rnam shes	visual consciousness

med dgag	external negation
med lta	view of nihilism
mos pa	aspiration
dmigs pa	objectified, to objectify, to focus on, object, to perceive
smad pa	to condemn
rtsod pa spong ba	rebutting the refutation
rtsod gzhi	referent of the debate
rtsod sa	bone of contention
mtshad ma	authoritative cognition/justificatory cognition
tshul	mode/mode of existence/way
tshul bzhin yid byed pa	correct attitude
mtshan ma	representation (in a Kantian sense)
mtshan mtshon	definition and definiendum/characteristic and characterized
mtshan gzhi	basis of characteristics
mtshungs ldan 'du byed	psychological compounds
rdzas yod	substantial entity
'dzin stangs	mode of apprehension
zhar byung	incidental
zhig pa	disintegration (must refer to the state of being disintegrated, not the process!)
zhe sdang	antipathy
zhen pa	fixation, clinging
gzhan dngos	nature of being other
bzhag pa	establish/posit
zad pa	extinction
zlog pa	to undo, to delete, to get rid of
bzod pa	resoluteness
bzlog pa	to reverse/contrapositive
bzlog phyogs	antithetical
bzlog pa 'phen pa	to project the contrapositive/modus tollens
yang dag par grub pa	to exist in reality
yid	introspection/introspective sense/cognition
yul can	subjective consciousness/subject
yongs su grub pa	consummate
yongs su gcod pa	to affirm through the elimination of another
yod lta	view of reificationism
rang gi mtshan nyid kyis yod pa	existent through its own characteristic
rang gi bdag gis thob pa	to achieve its own status
rang gi bdag nyid du yod pa	that which exists as itself
rang rgyud	autonomous
rang ngos nas grub pa	existent/established through its own entity
rang nyid tshugs thub	stands on its own
rang dbang du grub pa	existent through its own power
rang bzhin kyis yod pa	essentially existent
rab rib	mist/clouded/cataracts
rigs 'dra rgyun	homogeneous continuum
rigs 'dra snga ma	previous similar moment
rigs 'dra phyi ma	subsequent similar moment

rigs shes	rational mind/rational consciousness
ro mnyam	congruent
lam gol	deviant paths
lung gi chos	articulated dharma
lung ma bstan	morally neutral
log rtog	misconception
gshis	nature
gsher ba	liquidity
sun 'byin	contradict/to refute
sems	mind/mental state
sems byung	mental episodes
so so rang gis rig pa	discriminative wisdom
so sor rtog pa	discriminative analysis
so sor brtags pan 'gog pa	cessation occasioned by analysis
sra ba	solidity
srid pa	becoming
srid rtse	peak of cyclic existence
srog	life/living being
bslad pa	conditioned
lhan skye kyis	innately

APPENDIX II

English-Tibetan Glossary

English	Tibetan
to be able to be taken to exist as long as it is not analyzed	ma brtags par grub pa
about to	mngon du phyogs pa
accrual	thob pa
to achieve its own status	rang gi bdag gis thob pa
to affirm through the elimination of another	yongs su gcod pa
afflictive emotions	nyon mongs pa
analysis	rtog par byed pa
antagonists	phas rgol
antipathy towards others	kun nas mnar sems pa
antithetical	bzlog phyogs
to appear other than as they are	phyin ci log tu snang ba
to apply a term	tha snyad gdags pa
applying the modifying term	khyad par sbyar ba
articulated dharma	lung gi chos
to ascertain	nges pa
aspiration	mos pa
attribute	khyad chos
authoritative cognition	tshad ma
autonomous	rang rgyud
basis of characteristics	'jug gzhi/mtshan gzhi
basis of imputation	btags sa
becoming	srid pa
beginning	sngon
being mine/being-possessed-by-the-self	nga yi ba/bdag gi ba

blasphemy	skur 'debs
bone of contention	rtsod sa
that which brings something into existence	sgrub par byed pa
cast-off rags	phyag dar khrod
cataracts	rab rib
categorical thesis	khyab pa spyir brjod pa
categorized as	khyab pa
causal form	rgyu gzugs
cessation occasioned by analysis	so sor brtags pa'i 'gog pa
characteristic and characterized	mtshan mtshon
clinging	zhen pa
clouded	rab rib
coextensive	khyab mnyam
cognition	yid
conclusion	mjug bsdu ba
conclusion	sgrub bya
concordant result	rgyu mthun gyi 'bras bu
to condemn	smad pa
conditioned	bslad pa
confident reliance	dad pa
to confirm	nges pa brtan du gtong ba
confirming example	mthun dpe
congruent	ro mnyam
consummate	yongs su grub pa
contact	phrad
contradict	sun 'byin
contradictory	'gal ba
contrapositive	bzlog pa
contrary categorization	ldog pa'i khyad pa
conventional	kun drzob/tha snyad
correct attitude	tshul bzhin yid byed pa
defining characteristic	rnam 'jog
definite property	nges pa can
definition and definiendum	mtshan mtshon
to delete	zlog pa
denigration	skur 'debs
that which depend on (them)	rten can
dependent designation	brten nas btags pa
deprecation	skur 'debs
deviant	phyin ci log
deviant paths	lam gol
diametrical opposite	'gal ba mi mthun phyogs/dngos 'gal
discredit	gnod pa
discriminative analysis	so sor rtog pa
discriminative wisdom	so so rang gis rig pa
disintegration (must refer to the state of being disintegrated, not the process!)	zhig pa
dismantling	gnod par byed
does not perceive	yang dag par rjes su mi mthong ba
elaborations	spros pa

to eliminate	rnam par bcad pa
empirical phenomena	ji snyed pa
to engage	spyod pa/'jugs pa
engagement	'jug pa
engaging with and detaching from cyclic existence	khor ba 'jug ldog
to enmesh	kun tu sbyor ba
to ensue	'jug pa
to be entailed	khyab pa
to enter	'jug pa
entity	dngos po
environmental result	bdag po' 'bras bu
erroneous	phyin ci log
essentially existent	rang bzhin kyis yod pa
establish	bzhag pa
established through its own entity	rang ngos nas grub pa
everyday life	'jig rten pa
examination	rtog par byed pa
example	chos can
exclusion	go bkag pa
to exist in reality	yang dag par grub pa
that which exists as itself	rang gi bdag nyid du yod pa
existent through its own characteristic	rang gi mtshan nyid kyis yod pa
existent through its own power	rang dbang du grub pa
existent	dngos po/rang ngos nas grub pa
external negation	med dgag
extinction	zad pa
extraneous cause	'phral rgyu
fabrication	sgro btags pa/rgro 'dogs/spros pa
facet	ldog pa
facilitating cause	byed rgyu
fact	chos can
faculties	skye byed
failure of entailment	ma nges pa
fallacy of accident	ma nges pa'i skyon
faults	nyes skyon
to be fixated on	zhen pa
fixation	zhen pa/mngon par zhen pa
to focus on	dmigs pa
to follow	rjes su 'gro ba
four grounds of attraction	bsdu ba bzhi
framework for understanding	'jog tshul
free from conceptual and verbal elaboration	sgra rtog gi spros pa zhi ba
to get rid of	zlog pa
hermeneutical method	'grel tshul
high status	mgnon mtho
homogeneous continuum	rigs 'dra' rgyun
immutable	ther zug
impermanence in virtue of the termination of the continuum	rgyun gyi mtha'i mi rtag pa

impugn	gnod pa
imputed entity	btags yod
in the process of arising	skye bzhin pa
incidental	zhar byung
inconsistent	'gal ba
indicative form	rnam par rig byed kyi gzugs
inextricable from	mi 'khrul ba
inherent existence	bdag nyid kyis grub pa
inherently	ngo bo nyid kyis
inherently existent	ngo po nyid kyis yod pa
innate cognitive process	blo lhan skyes
innate cognitive process grasping things as truly existent	bden 'dzin blo lhan skyes
innately	lhan skye kyis
instance	bye brag/chos can
instantiated in	rjes su 'gro ba
internal and external worlds	snod bcud
internal negation	ma yin dgag
intrinsic	gnyug ma
introspection/introspective sense	yid
investigation	rtog par byed pa
to be involved	'jug pa
is irrational	mi rigs pa
justification	rnam 'jog gi rgyu
justificatory cognition	tshad ma
to knock over the first domino	ldog pa gcig pa'i dpung 'phul
life	srog
linguistic and conceptual conventions	sgra rtog gi tha snyad
liquidity	gsher ba
living being	srog
main point	dngos kyi don
marked by	bsgos pa
the matter at hand	skabs kyi don
the matter to which it is to be applied	don la sbyar ba
the matter to which the analogy is to be applied	dpe don la sbyar ba
means to achieve definite goodness	nges legs kyi grub byed
means	sgrub byed
mental episodes	sems byung
mental state	sems
mere phenomena	chos tsam
merely being conditioned	rkyen nyid 'di pa tsam
merely conditioned dependently arisen phenomena	rkyen nyid 'di pa tsam gyi rten 'byung
merely free from obstacles to contact	thog pa'i reg bya bkag tsam
mind	sems
misconception	log rtog
misperceived	brdzun pa
mist	rab rib
mistaken	brdzun pa
mobility	gyo ba

mode	tshul
mode of apprehension	'dzin stangs
mode of existence	tshul
mode of positing	'jog tshul
to project	'phen pa
modus tollens	bzlog 'phen pa
most difficult object of refutation	dgag dka' sa
movement	rgyu ba
mundane	'jig rten pa
mundane convention	'jig rten pa'i tha snyad
mutually exclusive and exhaustive	phan tshun spangs 'gal
nature	gshis
nature of being other	gzhan dngos
negation of the premise for the absurd conclusion	thal rtags bzlog pa
nominal convention	tha snyad
nonentity	dngos med
nonexistent	dngos med
non-psychophysical aggregates	ldan min 'du byed
nonindicative form	rnam par rig byed ma yin pa'i gzugs
object	dmigs pa
object to be comprehended	gzhal bya
the object to be measured	gzhal ba
objectified	dmigs pa
to objectify	dmigs pa
obsession	mgnon par zhen pa
obstacles to contact	thogs pa'i reg bya
ontological status	rnam bzhag
ontology	rnam bzhag
opponent	phyogs snga ma
opponent's position	phyogs snga
ordinary	'jig rten pa
origin	thog
by parity of reasoning	mgo snyoms
partial	nyi tshe ba
particular	bye brag
particular characteristics	khyad par mtshan nyid
path of liberation	rnam grol lam
peak of cyclic existence	srid rtse
pertaining to nirvana	rnam par byang ba'i phyogs
pertaining to samsara	kun nas nyon mongs pa'i phyogs
philosophical system	rnam bzhag
pitfall	ltung ba'i gnas
to posit	'jog pa/bzhag pa
premise	sgrub byed
to be present	'jug pa
previous similar moment	rigs 'dra snga ma
primary meaning	dngos kyi don
priority	snga ma
to project	'phen pa
to project the contrapositive	bzlog 'phen pa

property	khyad chos
property ascribed by the conclusion	bsgrub bya'i chos
proposition	sgrub bya
psychological compounds	mtshungs ldan 'du byed
quality	khyad chos
rational consciousness/rational mind	rigs shes
realization	mgnon du byas pa
reality	de bzhin nyid/chos nyid
realized dharma	rtogs pa'i chos
reason	sgrub byed
reasoning conducting ultimate analysis	mthar thug dpyod pa'i rigs pa
the reasoning which is the contrapositive of the reductio	thal ba bzlog pa rtags kyi khyab pa
rebuttal of the critique	skyon spong
rebutting the refutation	rtsod pa spong ba
referent of the debate	rtsod gzhi
referent	'jug gzhi
refutatory argument	'go pa'i rigs pa
to refute	sun 'byin
refuting the exemplified	don 'gag pa
refuting the rebuttal of the critique	skyon spong dgag pa
to regard	'jog pa
reificationists	dngos po'i ngo bo nyid smra ba/dngos por smra ba
release	gtong ba
representation	rnam pa/mtshan ma
requiring no more training	mi slob pa
resoluteness	bzod pa
resoluteness pertaining to the upper realms	rjes su shes pa'i bzod pa
resultant form	'bras bu'i gzugs
to reverse	bzlog pa
to satisfy a predicate/qualified by	khyad par du byas pa
to saturate	'bag bar byed pa
to see things just as they are	yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin gzigs pa
self-grasping	ngar 'dzin
sense faculties	dbang po
sequence	snga phyi
to set out	'jog pa
similarity	mgo mtshungs
similarly	mgo snyoms
solidity	sra ba
sophist	rtog ge ba
sophistry	rtog ge
stands on its own	rang nyid tshugs thub
to state	'jog pa
state of birth	skye srid pa
state of death	'chi srid pa
subject	yul can
subordinate	'khor
subordinate category	khyab bya

subsequent similar moment	rigs 'dra phyi ma
substantial entity	rdzas yod
substantialists	dngos por smra ba/dngos poi ngo bo nyid smraba
superimposition	sgro 'dogs
superordinate category	khyab byed
supplying the middle term	khyad par sbyar ba
supramundane	'jig rten las 'das pa
system	rnam bzhag
target of the reductio	thal chos
teaching	gdams ngag
to terminate	rnam par bcad pa
thesis	sgrub bya
third possibility	phung gsum
time and resources	dal 'byor
transitory aggregates/transitory assemblage	'jig tshogs
ultimate analysis	mthar thug dpyod pa
undermine	gnod pa
undistorted	phyin ci ma log pa
to undo	zlog pa
universal characteristics	spyi mtshan nyid
unobstructed path	bar chad med lam
unrelated	'brel med
the very nature	chos nyid
view objectifying the transitory assemblages	'jig tshogs lta
view of nihilism	med lta
view of reificationism	yod lta
wandering	rgyu ba
way	tshul
the way things really are	de kho na nyid
wisdom of having abandoned the desire realm	rjes su shes pa
to withstand analysis	dpyad bzod

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APPENDIX III

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Suvarṇottamaparamavijayasūtra-rāja-sūtra, Toh. 555, rGyud-'bum Pa 19a1–151a7.
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